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FREDERICK II.

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TO

ODERN HISTORY,

FROM

THE BRITISH MUSEUM

AND

IE STATE PAPER OFFICE.

BY

FREDERICK VON RAUMER.

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FREDERICK II. al

AND

HIS TIMES.

LONDON:
RLES KNIGHT & CO., 22, LUDGATE STREET.

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PREFACE.

FREQUENT and loud complaints have been made of the defectiveness and inaccuracy of history. In part they are certainly well founded, and like many other things which are imperfect, cannot be entirely remedied; on the other hand, however, we might in a great measure, remedy them, and at least approach the attainment of the object, if the historian were liberally allowed access to all the existing sources of information, and if no mystery were made of that, the publication of which would be equally harmless and instructive.

It is an incontrovertible, and, it is to be hoped not merely temporary, advance of the age, that, in our days, what really decides the affairs of the world can no longer remain a court or cabinet secret, that stratagems and intrigues, prejudices and bribery, no longer decide on peace and war or the prosperity and progress of nations. The present lies open to the judgment of contemporaries, and the historian is able to collect the most essential particulars, though the most recent diplomatic correspondence is partly closed and

sealed up against him. This is not the case with respect to earlier times, where that which is published is at variance with the more effective secret springs, and requires very many corrections. Even for the time of King Frederick II. of Prussia, measures and resolutions were adopted (at least in some courts) in the above-mentioned blame spirit.

The English government, therefore, deserves much the greater praise and more sincere gratitude for having opened to me the State-paper Office with its treasures, not merely for more ancient times, but also for that part of the eighteenth century to which my investigations were directed. And this permission was not accompanied with a hundred suspicions, restrictive precautionary measures, which cost time, and create vexations, but it was unfettered; and I met also with the most willing and friendly support from the gentlemen who are in offices of the establishment. The dispatches of ambassadors which passed through my hand were:

From France,	37	folios.	
Prussia,	85	,,	Including the papers of Mr. Mitchell.
Austria,	60	,,	
Russia,	75	,,	
Saxony,	3	,,	
Holland,	16	,,	
Sweden,	15	,,	
Royal Letters	1	,,	
In all	292	folios.	

I have received from Paris assurances of similar favours, if my avocations would permit me to make use of them. At home, the prophets who look forwards, and those who look backwards (the historians), are equally destitute of credit; at least, we Germany have unfortunately not yet attained to laudable theory and practice respecting the use historical documents which is recognized in London and Paris.

Under these circumstances I could not compose a comprehensive, critical, comparative work on the [illegible]es of Frederick II., but necessarily confined myself to extracting from the above folios what was most important and instructive, and arranging it in a clear manner. King Frederick II. is the centre of the whole, but his age, as well as himself, is reflected in those sources, by which the title of the book, if not justified, is excused.

After many doubts how the materials should be arranged and worked up, it appeared to me to be the most advisable to retain the original form of the dispatches in the essential parts, in order that the English point of view might be as far as possible preserved. In order to avoid too great a dismemberment of the accounts, coming from such various countries, I was sometimes obliged to comprehend many of them (accurately marking the time, however) under one general head, nor could I refrain from making, in some places, additions and explanatory observations. A circumstantial intro-

duction on the state of Europe at the time of the accession of Frederick II. appeared to me to be superfluous, because every friend of history is sufficiently informed on this subject, or may read in the King's works in what light he viewed that time and his own situation.

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FREDERICK THE SECOND,

AND HIS TIMES.

CHAPTER I.

Prussia—Dispatches of Guy Dickens, English Ambassador at Berlin—Illness and Death of Frederick William I.—Behaviour and Speeches of the new King—Observations on the Character and Position of Frederick II.—His Plans—State of Europe.

From the commencement of the year 1740, it was evident that the approaching death of Frederick William I. was near at hand. Accordingly, the dispatches of Mr. Guy Dickens, English ambassador at Berlin, contain hardly anything but accounts of the king's health. Thus on the 5th of January 1740, he writes;* "I have no news to send from this place; the king is indisposed, and keeps his room. We are told that he is in such a horrible bad humour, that nobody can come near him without being ill used in words or blows."

On the 12th of January, Mr. Dickens states that the king's health and humour are better; but eleven days afterwards he writes, "The evils increase; they proceed chiefly from the violent agitation in which this prince puts himself as often as things do not go to his mind."

On the 9th of February the ambassador continues, "The king is very ill, but he looked from the window

* British State-paper Office, Prussia, vol. l.

on a sledge party. His left leg is prodigiously swelled, and he has an oppression on the chest; but some persons believe that he only pretends to be so bad, to observe the countenance of the prince-royal and of such as he thinks may wish a change."

On the 12th of May he writes, "The king is very much swollen, and the physicians have declared that his recovery is not to be thought of. The crown prince invited several officers to his country seat * without the king's permission, and, contrary to his will, favours the importation of corn from Mecklenburg. This is a sign that he considers the recovery of his father as impossible. The physicians allow the latter to do what he pleases."

On the 4th of June Mr. Dickens writes, "The king died on the 31st. The new king said to the officers that having been their comrade, he knew how much his father was indebted to their diligence and application for the good order in which the troops were. That he did not doubt but they would show the same zeal for his service, now Providence had placed him upon the throne; and he concluded by desiring them to exert still more their endeavours, if possible, and in particular, that the superiors should not behave to the inferior officers with rudeness, or permit the soldiers to be used ill without reason. Frederick addressed similar discourses and thanks to the ministers; he especially recommended two things to them; first, never to make any distinction between his interest and that of his subjects. Secondly, that in all their reports they should be faithful, and represent things as they truly were."

He further gave orders to sell corn at reasonable

* Dispatch of the 17th of May.

prices from the royal magazines; and to restore the intercourse with the neighbouring states, where it had been interrupted.

Though the death of a king of Prussia, even in the year 1740, was not a wholly unimportant event, no person at that time had a presentiment of the weighty consequences of it. These proceeded partly from the character of the king, partly from the general situation of Europe. Let us first turn our attention to the former. An austere education, pedantic instruction, and severe trials, had given the character of Frederick II. an early firmness and maturity; but at the same time produced in him a decided aversion to much that was at that time usual and highly respected, and inclined him to the new French philosophy. From this twofold source originated many points in his character directly opposed to each other. Profoundness, and levity of observation and judgment; noble resolutions, and offensive wit; roughness, and elegance of manners, &c. But that his character was at the bottom sound and magnanimous, appears evident to the careful observer, from many of his early expressions; though he did not open his heart to every body, and never forgot to whom, and for what intent, he spoke and wrote. Thus, with all his admiration of Voltaire, for instance, Frederick knew, as early as 1740, how to appreciate the dark side of his character.*

Confidential communications show, better than state documents and public declarations, how he felt and thought, and his resolutions and actions proceeded from these feelings and thoughts, no less than from external occasions and events.

* Œuvres posthumes, viii. 149, 153.

The mortal sickness and the sufferings of his father made a profound impression upon him. Hence he writes to Voltaire on the 26th of February 1740:*—

"Je sens en moi la voix de la nature,
Plus éloquente encore que mon ambition,
Et dans le triste cour de mon affliction,
De mon père expirant je crois voir l'ombre obscure;
Je ne vois que sa sepulture,
Et le funeste instant de sa destruction.
Oui, j'apprends, en devenant maître,
La fragilité de mon être;
Recevant les grandeurs, j'en vois la vanité."

Serious reflections of this nature did not, however, in any way depress the king; on the contrary, the magnitude of his duties appeared to him in a new and much stronger light, so that he writes to Voltaire,† "Since the death of my father I belong entirely to my country, and in this spirit I have laboured, to the utmost of my power, to adopt as speedily as possible all measures necessary for the general good."

But that Frederick did not see the general good only in quiet, peaceful improvements—that with a full treasury and a well-disciplined army, he would undertake some bolder enterprize—would seek to acquire power and glory, and not merely profit by the opportunities that might offer, but endeavour to create them, we have more convincing proofs in hand than can here be given.

It would be equally easy to enumerate in this place the general arguments which have been a thousand times repeated, against views and plans of this nature. Instead of this, I will rather spare

* Œuvres posthumes, ix. 95.
† The 27th of June, 1740. Œuvres posthumes, ix. 112.

the space for the development of the especial motives and relations from which resolutions and actions proceeded. The death of the Empress Anne of Russia, and still more, that of the Emperor Charles VI., were events of decisive importance. But before we treat of them, I must (as the order of time and the view of the entire situation of Europe requires) communicate some ambassadorial dispatches from Stockholm, Petersburg, and Paris.

CHAPTER II.

Affairs of Sweden—Parties—Situation with respect to Russia—Military establishment—Influence of the French and Russians—The Diet—Bribery—Mademoiselle Taube—The King and the Queen—Desire of War.

CHARLES XII.'s extravagant love of war, had not only nearly annihilated the importance of Sweden in the affairs of Europe, but had given occasion for parties in the kingdom itself to become more decidedly opposed to each other, and increased more and more the influence of foreign powers. The annexed dispatches of the English ambassador Burnaby, give but too much information respecting this unhappy and condemnable state of things. On the 4th of January, 1740, he writes from Stockholm :*—

"Some leading men make no scruple (before the assembly of the states has begun) already to declare for a war against Russia, at all events; and many of the officers who composed the last diet, join in the

* State-paper Office, Sweden, vol. lxxvii.

same opinion. Others less violent and of more reflection, are sensible of the danger to which their country may thereby become exposed, and would retract their notions, if they could do it without weakening their interest with their own party. But as that would be very difficult, these likewise are for an offensive war, alleging, however, no other reason for it but the old proverb, *le vin est tiré, il faut le boire.*

"A third set of people are absolutely against acting offensively; however, declare themselves ready to enter into any measure for putting the kingdom in a state of defence, which they confess to be necessary, considering the provocations which the Czarina has met with.

"There still remains a fourth party, who would willingly accommodate matters with the Russians, and avoid a war, from a sense of their own weakness to support it by themselves, and of the little assistance to be reasonably expected from France; but this party does not appear so numerous as it really is; first, because it is an established maxim in this country, that what has happened may, nay will, happen again; consequently, that 8000 Swedes will beat 80,000 Muscovites; and no Swede who will not, in a manner, own himself a coward, dares publicly avow that he thinks otherwise.

"Secondly, because that of this class, there are many of weight and consideration, who see the apparent danger, and yet are willing to confront it for a while, in hopes of distressing the present administration, and making them odious to the kingdom, by the calamities inevitably attending an unsuccessful war, engaged in wantonly, and at their instigation.

"This enumeration, my Lord, of the different ways of thinking of the several parties, is not barely ideal, and as there are so many who, out of different views, are ready for a war, and so few who openly declare against one, Providence for them must interpose, and they will have a diet and a battle with the Muscovites before the month of June next; for which, as great preparations as the Swedes are in a condition to make by land, are making, but with all the privacy that the nature of such things can possibly admit.

"The Russians (continues the ambassador on the 1st of February) begin to speak in a higher tone to the Swedes. Ostermann says to the Swedish ambassador at Petersburg, that the Czarina could no longer conceal her resentment of the usage she had received from hence, not only by the transport of so many troops to Finland, whilst she was engaged in the war with the Turks, and in peace with the king his master, but also by their sending commissaries to Constantinople, to prevent their ratifying the treaty which she had concluded with the Porte.

"The organization of the Swedish army is insufficient and imperfect (dispatch of 26th of February). According to the constitution of Sweden, a soldier and a sailor are both amphibious creatures, and till they arrive at the place of rendezvous, they are not certain whether they shall be employed by land or by water; to which I may add, without offence, that as they are mustered but once a year, and the culture of their little farms is the sole occupation of most of them, in times of peace, they are sometimes called to action when, excepting courage, they want every military qualification for either service.

While the French were active in negotiations and grants of money to obtain their purposes, Harrington writes to Burnaby on the 15th February:—"Prince Scherbatoff, the Russian minister at London, gave notice that the Swedes had the intention to begin hostilities. Russia and England unite themselves to try that the former minister of Sweden could be restored in the next diet, and the present turned out."

On the 9th of May, Burnaby reports:—"It is not yet fully decided whether the diet shall meet. In the case of convocation, the sum of 6000 pounds and upwards will be necessary to be employed towards procuring a return of the dietines of the best-intentioned of the burghers and the clergy; and towards making such of the head families amongst the nobility, who are known to be well disposed, and have not wherewithal to be at the expense of the journey, to appear themselves at the diet; and not throw away their proxies upon such of their relations who may happen to be in town, and who are frequently found to act in complaisance to private interests, contrary to the inclinations of their constituents; as was the case in the last diet, when several sober heads of families remained in the country, out of indigence or laziness, and deputed their hot-headed sons, a parcel of young officers, to act for them, only because their posts obliged them to be upon the spot.

"Of this sum of 6000 pounds, Mr. Bestucheff says, he is already empowered to pay one half, and it is calculated to be sufficient to secure the election of a proper Marshall, and a number of friends in the secret committee; but then it is fit I should apprise

your lordship that further remittances will be necessary, when these points are gained.

"It will be happy for this nation, should her Czarish majesty be willing to accept of some people for a sacrifice to her resentment; but if that cannot be compassed, I am assured by Mr. Bestucheff, in the strongest terms, that no considerations whatever will prevent his mistress from taking ample revenge for the affronts that have been put upon her.

"But the Swedish ministry sees not the danger,* and Count Sparre said to me, 'Well, Sir, your friends the Muscovites go on bravely, but do not rely too much on our differences, for we have it in our power to make up with the Czarina whenever we think fit.' I made answer, that as a well-wisher to Sweden, I hoped that his excellency would embrace the opportunity. 'Perhaps,' he said, 'we may, and perhaps not; that depends upon us.' And so by the conduct of the government, one ought to think; for excepting that they have just purchased 14,000 knapsacks, some horse harnesses, and a few tents, I do not find them in more readiness to sustain an attack, than they were six weeks ago. Several of the clergy have already preached against the alliance with the Turks, both in town and country. One of the king's chaplains has taken the same liberty in the pulpit, in the king's and the queen's presence,† and bishop Berzelius has had the mortification to hear the same doctrine advanced in his own parish, by one of his curates."

* Dispatch of 20th May.

† Frederick, son of the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, became king on the 3rd of April, 1720, and had married, on the 4th of April, 1715, Ulrica Eleonora, sister of Charles XII.

On the 17th of June, the English government assigned 4000 pounds for the above-mentioned expenses,* and on the same day Burnaby writes, "The French ambassador offers to the King of Sweden, that the King his master would immediately give regiments to his Swedish Majesty's two sons, by Mademoiselle Taube, and settle estates upon each of them in Alsace." Yet the king answered, "that no personal interest could have any influence in fixing his determination."

On the 1st of August, Burnaby writes,† "If we are so happy as to get a plurality of voices in the election of a Marshall, and of the members that compose the select committee, I think it will then be in his Majesty's and the Czarina's power, for a trifle of expense, to appoint the person they please for successor to these dominions, as it is generally allowed the French design doing, if their party prevail."

Soon afterwards the diet was summoned to meet on the 4th of December, 1740, and on the 29th of August, Burnaby writes, "My table is not less frequented than any of the foreign ambassadors (which become extraordinary allowances); the additional number of guests, who must be fed and caressed, to be kept firm during the diet, will enhance my expenses, far above what my allowance is able to bear."

On the 11th of October, Burnaby continues, "According to the advices our friends say they receive of the elections in the provinces, we are sure of five parts in eight of the clergy, burghers, and peasants, and in hopes of balancing the power of the nobility.

* Harrington to Burnaby. † State-paper Office, vol. lxxviii.

The city of Stockholm is so equally divided, that the election will entirely depend upon the old or new method of collecting the voices. The decision of this material point lies now before the senate, where the sentiments are also so nearly equal, that it may chance to depend on the king's double vote to determine it as he thinks fit. But what will your lordship say or think if his Swedish majesty's determination should be in favour of our adversaries? I own I apprehend something like it, for his Swedish majesty having nothing more at heart than to retain Mademoiselle Taube in town during the diet, against the Queen's earnest entreaties, and the advice of his most faithful servants, is capable in a peevish humour, of risking his all, of throwing himself entirely into the hands of the French ambassador and the French party, who have promised to support her. The Queen has already shown her husband such visible marks of coldness on this account, that to make her easy, his Swedish majesty was pleased to promise Mademoiselle Taube should be sent away. But Count Gyllenborg, Baron Sparre, and Mr. St. Severin, are so perpetually with that lady, advising her not to leave the country, and assuring her that if she does it will be once for all, that it is doubtful whose influence will at last prevail, and whether the decision may not occasion an irreconcileable breach between their Swedish majesties.

"The most favourable omens for us, are, the confusion and distress of the opposite party, and the unwarrantable measures they pursue to maintain their superiority. For instance, they have just sent orders to Finland, to forbid the officers who have any command in the army, even heads of families,

to come to the assembly of the states, which I am informed is such an infringement upon the privileges of the nobility, according to the constitution of this country, that as, on one hand, it will exclude all those from the diet who are best able to give an account of the condition of the troops, so, on the other hand, if a body of these gentlemen should come to town in spite of the prohibition, and insist upon their birthright, it may fall heavy upon some people in the ministry.

"In this uncertain state of affairs, his Swedish majesty's own resolutions are so unfixed, that he knows not which way to turn himself, nor which party to adhere to. This has thrown him by fits into such despondency, that he has talked of abdicating the throne; and once he went so far as to give Mr. Wiebel, his master of horse, a list of the persons' names who were to attend him to Cassel, and of those his majesty would have in the coach with him."

While parties were in this state of equilibrium, important events in other countries could not fail to affect Sweden. When the news of the death of the Empress Anne (28th October) was received at Stockholm, Burnaby writes,* "When the favourable circumstance of so critical a conjuncture comes to be represented before them at the diet in gaudy colours, I greatly apprehend, that as there is not a Swede, even amongst our friends, who does not secretly flatter himself at this time with the hopes of recovering their lost provinces, we shall be forsaken by many on whom we now depend."

* Dispatch of 7th November.

The preceding extracts, which bring down the history of Sweden to a decisive moment (to the death of the Empress Anne and the Emperor Charles VI.), give occasion to melancholy reflections. Not only the political predominance of that kingdom is lost, but even the internal unanimity, and the noble pride which testifies and maintains the energy of a people. Everything truly Swedish is vanished, or at least severed into two opposite parties, which are wholly guided by foreigners, and influenced by the most miserable motives. The restrictions on the king's power appear so great, that he can in no case really accede, or even direct, and yet amidst all this feebleness the concerns of a mistress play an important part. On the other hand, the estates, which appear to be so judiciously constituted of the several branches (clergy, nobility, citizens, and peasants), by no means fulfil their great vocation, but the value and importance of the form disappear, under the pressure of poverty and the power of self-interest. Even the manifestation of the wish to restore the ancient splendour of Sweden, can excite neither pleasure nor confidence, because it does not go hand in hand with prudence and sound policy. Thus we feel a presentiment, that in the great events which are preparing, Sweden will act only a subordinate part, and be set in motion for foreign objects, rather than possess adequate means to promote objects of its own.

CHAPTER III.

Russia—General situation—The Duke of Courland—Illness of the Empress Anne—Discontent—Conspiracies and Punishment—The Dolgoruckys.

THE development of the affairs of Sweden is intimately connected with the accounts which we find in the dispatches of the English ambassadors concerning Russia. The Appendix to this volume (*which I beg may be read first*) contains many particulars relative to the history of this kingdom, from the year 1704 to 1740.

I resume the thread of the narrative where I dropped it. On the 16th of January, 1740, the ambassador Bell gives an account of the fêtes and rewards bestowed on account of the peace with Turkey. On the 29th of February, Mr. Finch, the new English ambassador, receives directions,* by which he is especially enjoined to promote the friendship of England and Russia, to watch the steps of the French ambassador Chetardie, to create a good understanding between Austria and Russia, and to support the French party in Sweden by money. Osterman, a great friend to Frederick II., wished however to know how Prussia would act, before he entered into engagements with England against France. Besides, he did not agree with Bestucheff and the Duke of Courland, respecting the measures to be adopted, and domestic or foreign parties (as Finch complains) delayed the conclusion of all treaties. To this must be added, that Wolinskoi

* State-paper Office, Russia, vol. xxvi.

had formed a very extensive conspiracy,* which was accidentally discovered, to restore the ancient Russian system and to expel the strangers, that he laid upon the Duke of Courland the blame of the last war against Poland and Turkey, and meantime the health of the Empress Anne became more and more precarious.

On the 24th of June, 1740, the English ambassador Finch writes from St. Petersburg:—

"As the Duke of Courland, when in his good humour and pleased, is more communicative in a quarter of an hour than Mr. Ostermann in a quarter of a year, his highness told me that the Queen Dowager of Prussia had prevailed on the new King to lay aside all thoughts of his intended journey to Paris." Frederick II. wrote to his ambassador, Von Mardefeld, at St. Petersburg, "Make my compliments to M. Chetardie, to whom in my present situation I cannot write as I used to do."

"Mr. Von Mardefeld is more assiduous than ever, sees Ostermann oftener than all the foreign ministers together, and can have access at any time, even when refused to others.†

"Russia wishes to include Prussia, Denmark, and Poland in the treaty with England, which does not agree with the plans of the English government. Bestucheff, and those who take part in the negotiations, may receive presents, under the cover of diplomatic forms.

"What was thought by the doctors to be an ulcer in the Czarina's kidneys, had proved only the great critical turn of her sex; which is attended with so

* Dispatch of 17th June, 1740.

† Dispatch of 1st Oct., 1740, vol. xxvii.

great, violent, hysterical symptoms, among others a strong hysterical fit last night, that she must be looked upon to be in great danger.

"The succession is fixed to the precarious life of an infant, without any further provision, in case of his demise.* Count Ostermann, who has not stirred out of his house these many years, from the true or pretended ill state of his health, was also carried to court yesterday morning, in a chair, sent for by special order; remained till night there, and is returned this morning early. In the course of the day, he held consultations with the ministers, and the Duke of Courland. Towards the evening the Czarina sent for the Princess Anne, though still very much indisposed, and declared to her highness her majesty's design to appoint the young Prince Iwan her successor, to the greatest surprise and disappointment of that princess. This disposition was made public this morning provisionally, and all the regiments, and guards, and the different colleges, sworn this morning, at the court, to stand by and maintain this succession; and the clergy are assembled at the cathedral for that purpose. The foreigners are to take the same oath to-morrow."

Before I give the subsequent dispatches from St. Petersburg, I subjoin the letter† of a well-informed Russian officer of rank, which gives interesting information respecting the state of parties at that time and the proceedings of the latter years:—"Respect-

* Iwan III. son of the Princess Anne and Prince Anthony Ulrick of Brunswick, born on the 23rd of August, 1740. See the genealogical table at the end of the volume.

† The ambassador Burnaby forwarded it to London on the 1st of August, 1740. State-paper Office, Sweden, vol. lxxviii.

ing the late conspiracies and executions in Russia I know the following particulars on good authority, and you may depend upon their accuracy. It is certain that the whole nation, and especially the higher class, is very much dissatisfied with the present government. For these five or six years they have complained—First, of the blind attachment of the empress for the Duke of Courland. Secondly, of his haughty and insupportable conduct, treating persons of distinction, they say, like vagabonds. Thirdly, of the duke's favourite, the Jew Liepmann, banker to the court, who ruins trade. Fourthly, of the extortion of immense sums, which are lavished partly in female follies, partly in paying the mortgages on the duke's estates, and in building magnificent palaces for him. Fifthly, of the levy of three-fourths of the young men to make soldiers of them, and sacrifice them like cattle, by which the estates of the nobility are depopulated and rendered incapable of paying the public taxes. Sixthly, of the total decay of the fleet, which Peter I. had formed at a vast expense.

"To remedy all this evil, and to promote their individual interests, the Princes Dolgorucky placed themselves at the head of many others, to execute the following plot. They were, besides, encouraged by the ill success of the campaign of 1738, the wretched state of the army, and the hope that Count Münnich would perish in Moldavia, which had been so fatal to Peter I., but, above all, by the universal discontent of the people. They came to an understanding with Sweden and France,* and it was agreed that, as soon as the Russian army should be destroyed or dispersed, Sweden should declare war

* Ils ont pris langue avec la Suède et la France.

and invade the empire with thirty thousand men. At the same time, the malcontents were to raise their standard, to confine the empress in a convent, to treat the duke still worse, and to put Princess Anne and her husband on board a ship, and send them back to Germany. It was likewise proposed to expel all the Germans, after having executed some of them, and to proclaim Princess Elizabeth, daughter of Peter I., empress.

"Such was the plan of the conspiracy. All the measures were taken, and only the defeat of Count Münnich was waited for, in order to commence a general rising. As, however, enterprises of this kind, when the execution of them is protracted, never remain entirely secret, the court obtained information respecting it. The suspected persons were arrested, whose plans had been baffled by the good fortune of Count Münnich, and peace was concluded with the Turks on as favourable terms as possible, and contrary to the views of France, which only sought to separate the Emperor of Germany from Russia, in order the more easily to oppress the latter. But when France saw the resolution of the empress, it put its hand to the work, in order to reap the honour of it, and to avert all suspicion. Thereupon the Swedes halted; the prisoners confessed, and were executed.

"Nothing of all this is mentioned in the papers published by the court, but the crime attributed to the persons executed is a testament said to have been forged by the Dolgoruckys at the time of Peter II. This, however, is only a pretext, because they will not have the weakness of the government known in foreign countries.

"The fire is not yet wholly quenched, and strict and rigorous investigations are still going on. You see that, if the plan had succeeded, France would have derived great advantages from it, and have got the Russian power, as well as the Swedish, into its hands. On this account we, (?) as well as the emperor and England, must rejoice at the discovery. The change would have had dreadful consequences in the west. Four or five palatinates in Poland had combined to expel the reigning king. The battle at Chotzim and the peace with Turkey have defeated the whole scheme."

CHAPTER IV.

France and Spain—War between Spain and England—Indisposition of the Queen of Spain—Views of the Cardinal Fleury—His complaints of Spain—Melancholy of Philip V.—His intention to abdicate—Dissatisfaction—Ill-will of France to England.

THE preceding letter shows that France, notwithstanding the pacific policy of Cardinal Fleury, was extremely active even in Stockholm, Petersburg, and Constantinople. Its own interest was more closely connected with the war which broke out in 1739, between England and Spain, in consequence of commercial differences. The following extracts are taken from the dispatches of the Earl of Waldegrave, the English ambassador at Paris, and from other letters, received from Madrid:—

"King Philip V. of Spain, on receiving the news of the taking of Portobello, became as furious as a wild bull;* he continues always in a profound

* Dispatch of July, 1740. State-paper Office, France, vol. lxxxviii.

melancholy since this news. He says that he has been imposed upon by being made to believe that all his posts were well provided and in a state of defence; that France, by her promises, had drawn him into a war, and afterwards abandoned him; that he had done better to have abdicated two years ago, and not have sullied his honour by this war. The queen still continues her baths and other remedies for her indispositions, which increase with the thoughts of the king's abdicating. The divisions in the ministry prevent their coming to any resolution, and make them only lose their time in useless conferences.

"Unless France declares war against England, there will be no such thing as amusing the king, nor diverting him from his resolution. These advices are far from exaggerations by the persons of the court, and of the queen's party; who say that their situation is without remedy, and very near some catastrophe. Those who wish for a change, as they do not see the interior of the court, can hardly believe the bad state it is in.

"Cardinal Fleury spoke openly and confidentially (to the Earl of Waldegrave *); he lamented the present disturbed situation of Europe, in the most pathetic terms, and looked upon it with the more sorrow, as he saw no way of getting out of it. His principal concern, speaking of us and Spain, was at the animosity of the two nations against each other. Spain, he said, had wished, that France would undertake the mediation, but he had absolutely refused, and told Campo Florido, frankly, it was a business he

* Dispatch of 11th of August, 1740.

would not meddle in, for he saw he could not succeed.

"His eminence then turned the discourse upon the conduct of Spain towards France, and protested to me, with all possible appearance of sincerity, that, at this very time, when Spain had all manner of need of France, he was no more informed of the designs of the court of Madrid, nor of what she intended to do, either here or in the West Indies, than the last man in France. He added, that this was scarce to be believed, but that it was truth, or he would not tell it me.

"He continued, that Spain, far from showing any inclination to be well with France, thwarted them in matters common decency would hardly bear. He gave me two particular instances; the first relating to the election of a Pope, on which he observed, that, though in fact it was pretty indifferent to France who was pope, yet as the other powers stirred in it, he thought it was becoming the French king's dignity, to have a party at the Conclave. That for this purpose, the Queen of Spain had been spoken to, and she had promised, that Cardinal Aquaviva, who is at the head of the Spanish faction at Rome, should go hand in hand with the French Cardinals, and their partizans. That so far from complying with her promise, Cardinal Aquaviva had joined with the Cammerlingo Albano, who is a professed opposer to France, and has ever been her declared enemy.

"The other complaint is, that the Queen of Spain has patched up her treaty with the Porte, for the kingdom of Naples, without her agent, Fisiochietti, so much as consulting M. de Villeneuve the French

Ambassador. Fisiochietti, he said, was an adventurer, who acted entirely in concert with Bonneval, and that it was infamous, for a prince of the house of Bourbon, openly to make use of Bonneval, as a channel.

"Fleury is averse to all wars,* complains of misfortunes at home, bad harvest, deficiencies in the revenue, &c.

"Accordingly the Spanish Ambassador Campo Florido sent a courier to Madrid on the 8th of August, and announced,† that France could not act for Spain in the present year, but renewed the hopes, that if the war continued to the next year, France might then declare war to England, since by that time this court would be in a proper condition."

In fact, the dispatches from Spain were very discouraging, as the following extracts prove:—

"The king of Spain's health is very bad, and he is excessively out of humour.‡ The queen keeps him a little in order, by the means of Farinelli. But it cannot hold long. The misery of the country and of the army is scarcely to be expressed; most of the subaltern officers are ready to starve, for want of their pay, and are forced to sponge, to keep body and soul together." "The common soldiers in Spain (says another passage §) are naked, and the officers look like beggars, and are not much better.

"In Madrid everything is in great confusion; and satires and pasquinades are handed about, which

* Dispatch of the 22nd of August, 1740.
† Letter from Madrid of the 25th of August.
‡ Letter of the 29th of August.
§ Letter of the 24th of September.

speak very freely of the present government.* The king of Spain will abdicate. The first letter which the French king wrote from Compiegne in July last, promising to assist Spain next year, with fifty men-of-war, did not satisfy the king of Spain, who said, it was only putting another trick upon him. Hereupon a second letter from the king of France arrived on the 1st of September, to prevent his abdicating, giving assurance, that he will even send out his squadron this year, in case of need; but it is not believed in Madrid that this is seriously intended.

"On the 5th of September, Fleury did not deny that the Brest fleet might perhaps put to sea, but did not explain himself respecting the motives and objects."

According to a dispatch of the 11th of September, Fleury said, "that he did not mean, by sending out his fleet, to go to war with England, or to attack or molest any of our ships. But that it was incumbent upon him to protect his own commerce, and to prevent, as much as in him lay, our making ourselves masters of and enjoying all the West India trade, which was very apparent, by our motions, must be our great object. That France had too great an interest in that part of the world, to see it swallowed up by England; that he did not mean to take from us a foot of land, that we had in any part of the world; but that it was his duty, as minister of the king of France, to hinder as much as he could our becoming more powerful than we were already."

A dispatch of the 12th of September says, "The Cardinal said he heard, that there was scarce a man

* Letter of the 3rd of September.

in England, but what wished for a war with France. He pretended to be very desirous of peace, and seemed to foresee an attack, and to wish to excite it. He cannot think, that his obliging us to strike the first blow,* will be looked upon in the eyes of the world as if we were the aggressors, supposing he had a mind to give it that turn. He solemnly affirms, that there is no treaty with Spain, but France cannot allow the Spanish possessions to fall into the hands of England.

"The French affirm, that they do not mean to make war upon the English, but to make them conclude peace." †

CHAPTER V.

Prussia—Claims of Frederick II. upon Juliers, East Friesland, and Mecklenburg—Situation with respect to France and England—The new position of Prussia.

THE preceding communications from Stockholm, Petersburg, Paris, and Madrid, show that the affairs of Europe, at the time of the accession of Frederick II., were already in a state of much confusion and embarrassment. They however presented no opportunity for great and bold enterprizes, for which reason the king was obliged, for the present, to divert his thoughts to what was nearest to him, and appeared to be attainable. Interesting information on this subject is given by the English ambassador

* Compare the situation of Frederick II. in the year 1756.

† Robinson's dispatch from Vienna, October 18th, 1740. State-paper Office, Austria, vol. cxxxii.

Guy Dickens, in a dispatch dated from Berlin, August 17th, 1740.*

The king (he says in substance) in the audience which he granted me, immediately entered upon business, and wished to have a precise answer to the three points already communicated to the English court: viz. respecting Juliers and Berg, East Friesland and Mecklenburg. He said, that he considered the king of England as his most natural friend and ally, but wished however to know how far he might depend on the support of England, with respect to these three pretensions: that he was ready to render services in return, but that the answer he had hitherto received, left him in the dark.

The ambassador replied by begging the king to be more explicit; that England would readily support him in everything that was just and practicable.

Hereupon the king continued: He entertained a true friendship for the king of England, but as he knew very well, princes are chiefly governed by their interests; that before he entered into engagements of any kind, he would be sure of what he did; and see clear into what the powers he contracted with, would do for him, as he was determined to stand to his engagements, when once he had taken them.

The ambassador then impressed upon the king, how important it was not to take any false step at the beginning of a reign; that the eyes of all the Protestant powers were turned upon him, and it was for him, to preserve the balance of power in Europe, which was in danger; that by defending the general

* State-paper Office, Prussia, vol. li.

good, he would act in the most advantageous manner for his own interest; that he should only be on his guard, against French influence and French policy.

The king said laughing, who could blame him, if he came to his ends by the means of that crown, without engaging in a war, especially since he did not see, how far he might depend on the help and assistance of other powers. In a few words, he desired to know, what we would do for him, and what we would have him do for us? Being asked what he required, he said, My pretensions to Juliers, Berg and East Friesland, are clear and indisputable. Let England guarantee them to me, and declare how it will enforce this guarantee, in case the succession should be open. With respect to Mecklenburg, which is an easy point, the necessary arrangements may be made at leisure, at some future time.

"The king will not hear of the old treaties, or of a mere defensive alliance, but proceed entirely upon a new bottom. During the whole audience, the king was in an extreme good humour, and not only heard with attention, all the representations I made to him, but was not in the least offended at any objections I made to what he said. It is undoubtedly the best way to behave with frankness to him."

On the 1st and 15th of October, however, Mr. Dickens writes: "Frederick has informed the French, that he has good assurances from London; and he endeavours to persuade the English that he is on good terms with the French. This double play however avails him nothing, and he entertains no-

tions on politics, which require very much to be rectified."

These principles and plans certainly underwent a great change in the course of a few weeks afterwards in consequence of the death of the Empress Anne and of the Emperor Charles VI.

CHAPTER VI.

Russia—Death of the Empress Anne—Iwan III.—Regency of Biron Duke of Courland—Pretensions to the throne—Hereditary right—Influence of the great nobility on Anne's last resolutions—Münnich—Ostermann—Bestucheff—Discontent of the Prince of Brunswick and his consort the princess Anne—Mutinous language of the officers—Biron and the prince of Brunswick—Examination and reprimand of the latter—Justification and boldness of Biron—His character—Wolinskoi's conspiracy—The princess Elizabeth.

On the 18th of October, 1740, Finch the English ambassador, at St. Petersburg, sent the following dispatch:*—"The Empress Anne died in the night of the 17th of October; the end of her life having been attended with such exquisite torments,† that even those who had the greatest interest in her preservation, could only pray to God, for her being delivered from so much misery. The princesses Elizabeth and Anne took leave of her, two hours before her death; the Duke of Courland was with her to her end.

"In the morning Ostermann proclaimed her will, namely that the Duke of Courland shall be Regent till Iwan is 17 years old. All is quiet; which is entirely owing to the declaration of this regency. For

* State-paper Office, Russia, vol. xxvii.
† As was also the case of Frederick-William I.

everybody in the country is sensible, that they can have nothing to fear, under the administration of a prince, who has given so many proofs of his own intrepidity and prudence. This regency has been sworn to and subscribed to, and settled as perfectly as anything so recent can be."

It may be doubted whether the preceding passage, which is not written in cypher, in the dispatch, contains the real sentiments of the ambassador, and if it was not rather written, to be read after the opening of the letter. Three days later the ambassador continues:*—"The new Emperor still sits in the nurse's lap. Last Sunday morning when the Duke Regent and his Consort received the congratulations, his eyes were continually gushing into tears, and he was obliged to have his handkerchief continually before them. I never saw so great an alteration, nor so strong affliction, painted on the countenance, as there was on those of the Duke Regent and the Duchess."

This feeling arose partly from attachment to the deceased Empress; but partly from a gloomy presentiment, that all was by no means fully settled, nor the ground under their feet secure. Information on these subjects is given in a detailed dispatch of the ambassador, dated the 1st of November, which, for fear of its being opened, he sent by a special messenger. He says, "According to the law of Peter I. the appointment of a successor to the throne always depends entirely on the reigning Emperor or Empress. Claims might be made by the following persons:

* Dispatch of 21st of October.

"1. The Princess Elizabeth, as daughter of Peter the Great.*

"2. Prince Peter, (afterwards the Emperor Peter III.) son of the elder deceased daughter of Peter the Great, and of Charles Frederick Duke of Holstein Gottorp.

"3. Anne, grand-daughter of Iwan Alexiewitsch and Consort of Prince Anthony Ulrick of Brunswick.

"4. Their infant son Iwan III.

"The general wishes very probably were for Elizabeth, from regard to the memory of Peter I., and her own popularity. The prevailing expectation (also of the ambassador himself) was that the Empress Anne would appoint the Princess Anne as her successor.

"Before the death of the Empress, the Duke of Courland assembled the heads of the Russian nobility, and informed them, that it was the intention of the Empress to nominate Iwan as her successor. The assembled nobles Bestucheff, Czerkaski, Münnich, Golofkin, Kurakin, Uschakof, Trubetzkoi and others requested the Duke to ask the Empress to express her intentions more positively. Hereupon they were summoned to the Empress, who made the same communications to them, that she had done the evening before to the Princess Anne, to her great astonishment.

"The affair however did not end here, for the question arose: who shall have the guardianship; and what shall be done in case of Iwan's death?

"Hereupon Bestucheff delivered his opinion in a secret council and said: 'It is very difficult to choose

* See the table at the close of the volume.

guardians among Iwan's relations, or to intrust the government to a number of persons. If it were proposed to intrust the guardianship to Iwan's mother, it would be better, immediately to proclaim her Empress, because she would always be vested with the sovereign power, and thereby enabled to overturn this new succession. Besides it was suspected that this Princess might be of a revengeful temper, and have a good share of the caprice of her father (Duke Charles Leopold of Mecklenburg Schwerin), which father might immediately come here, and by his influence over his daughter, engage this country in all his private quarrels, and embroil it with the court of Vienna, and with most of those Princes in the empire, whose friendship it was the interest of Russia to cultivate in the present situation; and that on the other side, by the credit of her husband, German counsels, suggested either from Vienna or Berlin, might have too great an influence over this government, for there was a remarkable difference, between being directed by those courts, and quarrelling with them.

"'That besides the Princess Anne had no knowledge of the affairs of this country, either foreign or domestic, and therefore on all these accounts she appeared to him utterly incapable of undertaking or going through with so heavy a task. That the greatest part of these latter objections, and this incapacity, laid as strongly against the Prince of Brunswick, so that for his part, he must equally put that Prince out of the question.

"'That as for a council of regency, everybody knew that this was as contrary in theory, to the nature of this government, and the genius of the

people, as experience had shewn it in practice, eleven years ago, when the Czarina mounted the throne; which he thought so notoriously evident, that he would not expatiate upon it.'

"When Bestucheff had thus disposed of all other claims, he endeavoured to prove the fitness of the Duke of Courland for the guardianship; he said he was well-informed, attached to the true interest of Russia, and placed in an elevated situation, prudent and intrepid. Enough, he, Bestucheff, was persuaded that they wanted a man, and that this man was the Duke of Courland. If the minister Czerkaski agreed in this opinion, they would endeavour together with other nobles, to persuade the Empress to appoint the Duke guardian. Czerkaski agreed, and the plan being submitted to the other members of the Junta they also gave their assent.

"Upon this Bestucheff went immediately to communicate to the Duke the consultation of the Junta, and the resolution they had taken, and to know whether his highness would accept the regency, if her majesty, on their humble representation, should be graciously pleased to intrust him with it. The Duke at first seemed (after the example of the bishops: nolo episcopari!) to excuse himself from undertaking so heavy a charge; to which he said he was not equal.—Whether this was out of a diffidence about the success of it, or out of decency to decline explaining himself, before her majesty's pleasure was known, or whether he already knew her majesty's intention to make him Regent, and therefore might safely excuse himself, I won't pretend to determine. But upon this, Bestucheff sent for Prince Czerkaski, to join his instances with his own,

in order to determine the Duke; and in appearance, Mr. Bestucheff talked very roundly to his highness, that as all he had in the world was owing to Russia, sure he owed more returns of gratitude than to abandon it, in this distress, at a time when he could render it such signal and important service, to which he was invited by a number of the first people of the country. That the preservation of the prosperity of Russia, and that of his own kingdom, were entirely combined together, and that he could neither serve Russia nor abandon it, in this crisis, but he served or ruined himself also. At last the Duke consented that the Junta should continue to pursue those counsels, which they might think the most beneficial for the interest of their country.

"Here the matter rested on the 5th, and her majesty growing worse, Count Ostermann was sent for early on the morning of the 6th to court, where the Junta communicated to him everything which had passed the day before relating to the regency, and desired him to speak freely his opinion upon it, since no steps had yet been taken. His excellency, as I hear, would willingly have been excused to give any opinion, pretending that the matter was too weighty for him, who was a foreigner, and belonged entirely to the deliberation of the natives. But he was immediately answered by Bestucheff, (for between them the understanding is not the best,) that he was surprised to hear the Count look upon himself as a foreigner, after having been so long in the country, in possession of one of the first posts, and in the almost sole direction of all the affairs of it, for which reason he thought the Count not only a Russian, but worth 20,000 others. That nobody desired to force

their opinion upon him, but only to know his. That if he would not declare it, they could not see of what use he could be in their deliberations.

"Count Ostermann soon saw by their discourse how things were going, and how far they were resolved, upon which he explained away what he had at first answered, in which he said he had been misunderstood, and that he thought the regency could not be better placed than in the duke's hand, nor a more prudent step taken for the interest of Russia.

"His excellency was then desired to draw the instrument appointing the great duke successor, and another to settle the regency on the Duke of Courland. These were soon done, and they then desired him to carry them both to her majesty, and to present the last to her in all their names as their joint request. This he did the same day, and her majesty immediately signed the instrument relating to the succession in his presence, and he fixed the seal to it. As to the other, to appoint the regency, she bade him leave it with her.

"Upon this the successor was immediately published, and sworn to; but as it was unknown to these people (whatsoever it might be with the duke), whether her majesty had signed the other, and she growing worse, and having had a strong fainting fit on the 11th, the Junta proposed that Ostermann should go again to her majesty, to discover, if he could, whether she had signed the instrument of Regency; and he receiving from her only a general answer, that every thing relating to her will and pleasure would be found after her death, the Junta then proposed that they themselves, and every body else down to the rank of a colonel, who was of the same opinion with them about the regency, should

sign an instrument, by which they should declare that, in case the empress should not have made a disposition to the contrary, or had made no disposition at all, that they would recognize the duke, regent during the minority.

"I believe that this was done not so much by way of provision (for the duke most certainly knew that her majesty had made one in his favour) as out of policy, and thereby to show the people that the regency had been conferred on him equally at the desire of the chief people of the country and by the special appointment of their sovereign.

"On the 11th, the three ministers and Field-Marshal Münnich departed with a commission from the Junta to the Princess Anne, and demanded her opinion who was the properest person for the regency. She would fain have been excused to give any opinion, but as she was well informed of the resolution taken by the Junta, and as the deputies pressed her to declare herself, she at last either did let drop that the duke would be the properest person, or they understood her answer in this sense, and reported it accordingly.

"On the 17th her majesty died, and the next morning Ostermann, with all the great people, were at court; the Princess Anne and the Prince of Brunswick also present; when it was proposed to seal up every thing in her majesty's apartments. This was begun, but when they came to the cabinet where she kept her jewels, and were going to seal that also, one of her dressers, who had waited many a year on her, and was her great favourite and confidante, declared that her majesty had in her presence signed a paper, brought to her at the beginning of her ill-

ness by Ostermann, and had ordered her to lock it up in that cabinet, and to bring her the keys of it, which from that moment had lain constantly under her head, and that her majesty had at the same time told her that this paper was of the greatest consequence, and that she should never open her mouth about it till her majesty was dead, and then declare that such a paper would be found there. The contents she knew not. It was accordingly found, opened, read, made known, and acknowledged and confirmed.

"The duke, who has been appointed regent, behaves since that time with the greatest politeness to the Princess Anne, and has assigned her 200,000 rubles as her dowry. The princess, on her part, is no less polite, yet she, as well as her husband, always looked upon the duke as their enemy, but now still more so.

"The regent having been informed that the Prince of Brunswick's adjutant, and some other officers of the second regiment of guards, the Simonowsky (of which the prince is one of the lieutenant-colonels), should have been very free in their discourse, and that in his highness' presence, by declaring that he ought to have been regent, and insinuating as if her late majesty's disposition to that purpose had been surreptitiously obtained, and perhaps forged, and that this might be easily set aside by a *coup de vigueur;* the regent being also informed that the prince had not imposed silence upon these officers, nor discouraged their rash and mutinous discourse, went on the 22d directly to the Prince of Brunswick, to acquaint him with the information he had heard, and to come to the strongest

explanations. Among others, he told him that though he was father to the emperor, he was at the same time as much his subject as any other people, and owed him the same fidelity; and that as he himself was appointed regent, and intrusted with the care of the empire, he should be sorry to convince his highness that legal fidelity and obedience to the emperor, his son, was as much expected from him as from any other individual in the empire. The prince was startled with this sound and firm explanation, and would have excused his having given ear to these idle discourses of young officers, to which, he said, he had not given any attention, though may be he might have been indiscreet in not imposing silence on them, and that he humbly begged pardon, and assured the regent that his conduct for the future should be more guarded, and not liable to any, the least, objection or complaint.

"The regent from the prince went directly to the Princess Anne, and communicated to her every thing which had passed. Her highness disclaimed having the least knowledge of the thing, much less any participation in what she so much disapproved, and she immediately followed the regent to court that morning, the 22d, and was with him nigh two hours, probably to soften things and to set them as right as she could.

"Notwithstanding, the prince was sent for to court next day, the 23d, when the cabinet ministers, the senate, and the generality were assembled, and the prince was obliged to undergo a sort of examination (the French would say, *Il fut mis sur la sellette*). The regent exposed to that assembly the whole affair from the beginning to the end, and then asked the

prince what could have been his idea, and what was he driving at? I am told that he was weak enough to answer, with tears in his eyes, that he meant an insurrection (I use softer terms than he did) to seize the regency. Upon which General Uschakoff (I have already mentioned his character and functions) said, 'Prince of Brunswick, every body, if your behaviour does not prevent them, will regard you as the father of our emperor; but if your conduct obliges them to it, they must regard you as the subject of your own sovereign. Your youth* and small experience may have been surprised and misled, but if you had been of riper years, and of parts and genius capable of undertaking and conducting such a design, by which the peace and tranquillity, the welfare and the very being of this great empire, might have been disturbed and brought into the utmost danger, I must declare to you, that though it would have been with the utmost regret, I should have proceeded against you, when guilty of high treason to your son and sovereign, with the same rigour that I could have done against any other of his majesty's subjects, though of much lower rank and station.'

"Upon this the regent stated the course of his appointment, as also the grounds, so that no doubt might be adduced as to the validity of the imperial instrument. 'Her Majesty,' he continued, 'has by it declared me regent, and I hold that high office from her favour, in the first place; but I hope, in the second, from the good opinion and confidence the chief people of the country, here assembled, have of and in me. But as her majesty has left me the power of resigning this high office, I do declare that, if this

* The prince was born in 1714, and his consort in 1718.

assembly think your highness fitter for it, or in any way capable of it, I will this moment divest myself of it in your favour. But if they should rather desire my continuance in it, the obligation I have to her late most gracious majesty, and to Russia, will determine me to keep this great trust, in hopes that, by the advice of these gentlemen, I may discharge it in a manner suitable to my gratitude, and for the advantage of this great empire.'

"Upon this a number of those present, declared that as they had before her majesty's death desired that the duke might be charged with the regency, they now begged that he would keep it, for the interest and preservation of the country. The regent then desired Count Ostermann to declare to the prince whether the instrument now called in question, and whose validity seemed to be doubted of, were not the same he carried to her late majesty. The count made upon this occasion the proper declaration, upon which it was proposed that every body present (which included all the major-generals) should undersign and seal these instruments, acknowledging their validity and engaging to maintain the dispositions of them. This was immediately done, and the Prince of Brunswick signed and sealed among the rest.

"The regent, as he always did the Princess Elizabeth all the service in his power, during the late czarina's reign, when she was under a sort of cloud, so he now seems desirous to secure her to his interest, knowing that she is very popular and well beloved, both for her own and for her father's (Peter I.) sake. He has given her money for the payment of her debts, and a sum of 50,000 rubles, which extensive act of grace is very popular.

"Nor is there any body to make head against him. He is otherwise generally beloved, by having obliged a number of people, and disobliged but few; these last only by a certain roughness, which the French call *brusque*, in his temper. But these were only sudden starts, which never last long, nor has he ever proved irreconcileable. So that, if his regency has been as well relished at Moscow, the great and populous capital of this country, as it has been here, I cannot yet see anything which can prevent his carrying on his regency without any disturbance. And if he continues as he seems to begin, it may prove infinitely to the benefit of this country, and not less to his own glory. Happy, however, it is for him that Wolinskoi's schemes were discovered, and that Catiline of this country destroyed. Had he lived till the day of her majesty's death, and had his conspiracy remained a secret, he, in all probability, would at this juncture have set fire to the four corners of Russia, and would have brought about a general massacre of all foreigners.

"The future, however remains very uncertain; the emperor may die, the Princess Anne have other children. She has also said it was not her business to be kept only for the breed.

"The French ambassador is in favour of Elizabeth, and the Prussian and Austrian of Anne."

CHAPTER VII.

Russia—Activity of the Regent—His Downfall—Participation and Cunning of Münnich, Anne, and Ulrick of Brunswick, Regents for their Son, Iwan III.

THUS Russia seemed happily to have escaped the dangers which generally attend an unusual change in the succession to the throne, and a firm government established. The English ambassador, writing from St. Petersburg, on the 8th of November, 1740, says:*—

"The regent applies himself with great assiduity to the dispatch of business. He is determined to know the exact state of all affairs as he found them, in order to show how he leaves them. Princess Anne is on an apparently good footing with him; they see each other frequently, but her husband has not appeared anywhere since his examination. He stirs not out of the Princess Anne's apartments, and the Duke of Courland but yesterday told a friend of mine, that this prince confessing his design to 'rebel a little,' as he called it, could not move anger, though it might pity, for his highness' weakness in having been drawn into such a mad notion with only eight accomplices, of which the buffoon of this court's coachman, an apprentice, and waiter, were three, who had been released."

So secure and composed, nay, almost presumptuous, was the duke, so little did he and the ambassador presage events that were close at hand, so

* State-paper Office, Russia, vol. xxviii.

entirely were most persons deceived respecting the state of affairs.

On the 9th of November, only a few hours after the writing of the above dispatch, the whole fabric of the new government was completely overthrown.

"On the 9th of November (writes the ambassador two days later), between three and four in the morning, Field-Marshal Münnich, at the head of a detachment of forty grenadiers from the guard of the winter palace, marched to the summer one, and seized, by a verbal order of the Princess Anne, the regent in his bed, who, about six, was brought prisoner to the guard-room in the winter palace; the whole Courland family being put under arrest. Immediately after, General Biron and the new cabinet minister, Bestucheff, were taken prisoners and carried to the winter palace also. Upon which all the great people were immediately summoned to court, when the Princess Anne, in her son's name, was declared great duchess, with the title of imperial serene highness, and charged with the administration of the government during the minority of her son. The prisoners were then taken to different fortresses, a *Te Deum* sung, orders distributed, petitions granted, the debts of the nobles paid, and the Prince of Brunswick declared generalissimo.

"Münnich declined this office, and desired that the army might have the honour to be commanded by the father of their sovereign. He was, however, appointed prime minister; Ostermann, high admiral and minister of foreign affairs; Czerkaski, high chancellor; and Goloffkin, vice-chancellor.

"The captive duke was then despoiled of all his

money and possessions, even to his gold watch and clothes."

Later dispatches of the ambassador, particularly one of the 18th of November, give the following account:

"This step," he says, "was resolved upon only the day before; the duke, by a strange fatality and blindness of his own, augmented by the flatteries of others, was firmly persuaded that he was to the last degree popular, and in full possession of the affections of every body, of what rank, degree, or profession soever, interpreting the implicit submission to his power, to be a firm attachment to his person.

"The Prince of Brunswick had renounced all offices, in order not to be under the duke, yet could by no means withdraw himself from his superintendence. The regent often met the Princess Anne, whence it was inferred that they were on good terms, whereas they were always quarrelling. Thus he said to her, on the 7th November, 'I can send you and your husband to Germany; and there was a Duke of Holstein* in the world whom he could, and, if he was forced to do it, would send for to Russia.'

"After such a declaration the breach must be irreparable; for the princess has too fine and lively parts not to have foreseen what she might expect, and too much spirit and resolution not to have resented, and prevented also, such a rash and bold design.

"On the 8th, Field-Marshal Münnich having presented some cadets to the princess, remained alone with her, and some explanations on the present state of affairs took place. She complained of the treatment which she and her husband experienced from

* Peter III., son of Anne and the Duke Charles Frederick of Holstein Gottorp, and grandson of Peter the Great.

the regent, so that they had scarcely any resource left but to leave Russia. In that case she begged the field-marshal would employ all that interest and credit he had with the duke, that they might have leave to take their child with them, to secure him from all that danger to which the sovereign of Russia might be exposed, was he left in the hands of his own and parents' mortal enemy. Thereupon Münnich asked if she had spoken to any body on the subject, and she answered, 'Not to a soul.' After many doubts, the princess resolved to confide in him alone.*

"Though Münnich had contributed to the elevation of the regent, suspicion and jealousy subsisted between them, and the latter intended, if possible, to get rid of the field-marshal, who had, therefore, reason to apprehend his own ruin.

"According to an agreement between Münnich and Princess Anne, Prince Ulrick went out for the first time and paid a visit to the regent in the summer palace. The prince and the duke went together to wait on the young czar, and from him to the Princess Anne. From thence they went also together to the duke's manège, just by. When that was over, the prince returned to the winter palace; and the duke, stopping at his brother's, General Biron's, in the way, went to the summer palace to dinner, where Münnich and all his family, with President Mengden and his, dined with the regent and his family.

"It is said that the duke that morning took notice, and as it made a great impression upon him he mentioned it to this company, that he could observe but very few people in the streets, and every body

* From Münnich's own account.

with a melancholy, dejected, gloomy countenance, as if people were not contented, which he was weak enough to attribute to their being dissatisfied with the Duke of Brunswick's conduct, without suspecting that his own regency had any share in it. The company, as is easy to imagine, said that either there was nothing in these appearances, or that they were owing to the people's regret for her majesty's death. However, the duke continued very pensive and silent during dinner.

"When that was over the field-marshal took leave, the rest of his family staying there. His excellency went home, and in the evening he waited on the Princess Anne, asking her if she had any order to give him, for his design was laid, and that he would execute it that very night. The princess was startled with the suddenness and importance of such a resolution, and would have inquired into the means. His excellency desired her to excuse both his not explaining them to her then, and also his awaking her out of her bed about three the next morning. After musing a little, her highness said, 'I resign myself, my husband, and my son, entirely into your hands, and rely on your conduct. May the Providence of God direct you and preserve us all.'

"From the princess, Münnich returned with Count Löwenwolde to sup with the duke, and they found him still doubtful, complaining of a lowness of spirits, a heaviness and uneasiness of his mind, which he had never felt in his life before. They both said that it might be some slight disorder, which a good night's rest would remove. However, both at supper and in the remainder of the evening, the duke, though otherwise talkative enough, said hardly a word.

Upon which, to animate, or at least to keep up the conversation, the field-marshal began to talk about his battles and all the several actions he had been in, during upwards of forty years' service. At last Count Löwenwolde asked him, very innocently, if he had never been in any action *by night*. The oddness of so ill-timed a question at that juncture struck the field-marshal, but recovering himself, and keeping a good countenance, he replied with seeming great indifference, that to be sure, in the great number of actions, he must have been in some at all hours of the twenty-four.

"His excellency told me that he observed that the duke, who was lying on his couch, the moment he uttered these words, raised himself up a little, and leaning on his elbow on the couch, and reposing his head on his hand, remained very pensive in that posture for a good quarter of an hour.

"About ten o'clock they broke up, and Münnich went to bed, but, as he said, without closing an eye. At two o'clock he got up, sent for his aide-de-camp, General Manstein, and made his arrangements with him. Both then went to the palace of the Princess Anne, where Münnich addressed the officers and soldiers, and selected some, whom he took with him to the princess. She complained of her unhappy situation, and gave orders that the regent should be arrested, and that they should obey the field-marshal in every particular. Nobody contradicted. The guards in the winter palace suffered all to pass unmolested. Manstein proceeded to the chamber of the duke, who was asleep, caused him, on his resisting, to be bound and gagged, and with his wife to be dragged away, with nothing on but their night

dresses. However, two quilts were taken off their beds and thrown over them. When the duchess heard who it was that directed these proceedings, she cried out with the extraordinary expression, that she could sooner have believed that God Almighty could die, than that the field-marshal would have served them so."

Neither the prince, nor Ostermann, nor any other person, had any knowledge or presentiment of all these proceedings.*

Wolfrad, Münnich's aide-de-camp, a man who had not shed a tear at the death of his parents, much as he loved them, said in the sequel, "When I spoke to the duke and the duchess at Schlüsselburg, I could not suppress a flood of tears, so affecting was the sight." The duchess fell at his feet, and begged him to intercede in favour of such an unhappy family.

Princess Anne, with her husband, assumed the government, and Münnich was her chief counsellor; yet doubts soon arose whether he would be able to maintain himself in favour and be reconciled with his old adversary, Ostermann.† However, as often happens in Russia, the new power was considered as well founded, and it was deliberated what measures should be taken, with respect to foreign affairs, after the death of the emperor, Charles VI.

* Dispatch of the 3d of January, 1741.

† Dispatch of the 25th of November.

CHAPTER VIII.

Austria—The Pragmatic Sanction—The death of Charles VI.—Maria Theresa—Despondency in Vienna—Reliance on Prussia and England—Pretensions of Bavaria—Indignation excited by them in Vienna—Opinions in London, Petersburg, Paris, and Dresden.

However interesting and instructing the preceding communications may be to the lover of history, the whole is detached and unconnected. It is not till the opening of the question of the Austrian succession that a new centre arises for the contemplation and development of the affairs of Europe; the paramount importance of which throws every thing else into the background. But whence were new claims and dangers to arise on an occasion when every thing appeared to be fully decided, and placed above the reach of all doubt?

With respect to the succession to the Spanish monarchy, there were various important considerations at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Whether the house of Bourbon, or that of Hapsburg, obtained the whole, or whether it was divided, it seemed that political prudence would be overlooked or justice violated. On the other hand, if the Austrian States were transferred from the male line to Maria Theresa, daughter of Charles VI., this would tend rather to weaken than to strengthen that power; besides, almost all Europe had accepted and guaranteed the natural, equitable, unobjectionable law of succession laid down by Charles VI., by the name of the Pragmatic Sanction. That the emperor endeavoured to obtain his object in the

way of justice and amicable arrangement, and to prevent all wars, was very commendable; it would indeed have been better for his heiress if he had added power to right, as on the other hand power has need to be supported by right.

This is not the place to show in what manner that law of succession was projected, examined, approved both at home and abroad, and Maria Theresa recognized as sole heiress to all her father's dominions.

Charles VI. died on the 20th October 1740.* On the preceding day Mr. Robinson, the English ambassador, wrote to London,—"Here, in Vienna, they are afraid of Turks, Saxons, Bavarians, and French.† The Grand Duke told to Mr. Borcke, 'The moment the emperor dies I will give you a letter myself for your master. There is nobody but his Prussian majesty, and the king of Great Britain, that I can rely on.'"

Two days after the death of Charles VI. Mr. Robinson writes from Vienna,†—"From the time that the emperor's sickness became serious I had observed too much the first effect of the consternation of this people not to apprehend, from a stroke unprovided for, their throwing themselves absolutely

* Frederick II. born . .	1712,	was now 28	years old.
Maria Theresa . .	1717	,, 23	,,
The Archduke Francis	1708	,, 32	,,
Louis XV. . . .	1710	,, 30	,,
George II. . . .	1683	,, 57	,,
Philip V. . . .	1683	,, 57	,,
Frederick of Sweden .	1676	,, 64	,,
Christian VI. of Denmark	1699	,, 41	,,
Elizabeth of Russia .	1710	,, 30	,,
Charles Albert of Bavaria	1697	,, 43	,,
Augustus II. of Poland	1696	,, 44	,,

† State-paper Office, Austria, vol. cxxxii.

in their last despair upon the mercy of France. Upon the approaching danger of losing the emperor, the Turks seemed to them already in Hungary, the Hungarians themselves in arms, the Saxons in Bohemia, the Bavarians at the gates of Vienna, and France the soul of the whole. I not only saw them in despair, but what was worse, that that very despair was not capable of rendering them truly and bravely desperate. Referring to my former dispatches, and the instructions given me, I say boldly, that England and the house of Austria are still entire when they be but men here. Count Zinzendorf said, sighing, 'Alas! were there but one Eugene alive!' Self-preservation appears to the Austrian ministers as the first and sole object, without troubling themselves about the rest of Europe.

"Maria Theresa is pregnant, and during her father's illness was near miscarrying with the child, which is still the uncertain pledge of the remains of this family. She is now better, and was able at noon, after her father's death, to admit the chief dicasteries to kiss her hand, whom she confirmed in their posts till new orders. She was saluted by the title of queen. The grand-duke stood at a little distance on the left hand, under the dais. She takes upon herself the government in the very same manner as a new king would. 'Oh,' cried the chancellor to me, 'were she but a man, with the very same endowments she has.'

"'As to providing for the future,' said the chancellor, 'believe me—and you need only judge of our present circumstances to believe it—we are most certainly doing it in every light and part whatever. Several things will be corrected, necessity will give

new life to this new government. We will not, cannot, irritate France; we know you do not desire it. But for the rest, we might even be left to ourselves to be as forward as you, had we money. In a word, let us come to ourselves a little; let us know your intentions more especially; we will probe and sound those of France. You will not, must not, be angry if we can confine the war to the sea; you began it yourselves abruptly. It was indeed the boldest stroke to be found in history; but as things are, both the general state of Europe, and the particular state of our own affairs demand the utmost attention and firmness."

"With respect to foreign affairs," concludes the ambassador, "no change will be made till it is seen what Bavaria, Saxony, and France do*."

Four days later, viz. on the 26th October, the ambassador writes,†—"An unaccountable notion has got into the heads of the populace here, more particularly in the neighbourhood of the city, who fancy that all government is dissolved by the emperor's death, and expect every day the elector of Bavaria to come and take possession of these countries. They have already assembled, and killed all the game in the neighbourhood of the villages. And yet Austria perfectly resisted the claims of Bavaria within a few months before the death of the emperor. In fact, the Bavarian ambassador about this time brought forward the pretensions of his master to the *whole* of the Austrian succession, and founded them on the will of the emperor Ferdinand I.

"I observed, that this ground was entirely unsa-

* Russia is not again mentioned in this place.

† Dispatch of 29th October.

tisfactory; first, because that will secured the succession, not merely to the *male* descendants (as the Bavarians affirmed), but to the *legitimate* descendants.

"Secondly, if Ferdinand I. had a right to lay down the order of succession, Charles VI. must have had an equal right, and the most recent must be preferred to the preceding.

"Never," says Mr. Robinson, "did I see a man in such a passion as the chancellor. 'Such irregularity, such ambition, such injustice, such cruelty!' These were the least of his expressions. 'But the court would act in another manner: they would begin by printing resolutions, but also take other measures, and that immediately.'"

In fact, it was of much less importance what wishes Bavaria might entertain, than what support it would receive from the greater powers. Among these England (engaged equally by a sense of justice and its situation) was firmly resolved to maintain the Pragmatic Sanction inviolate. On the 31st of October, Lord Harrington wrote to Mr. Robinson, "England and Holland will remain in strict alliance with Austria. The king cannot doubt of taking the most effectual means to secure the concurrence of the king of Prussia and the Czarina."

On the 26th of October (soon after the death of the empress Anne) the news of the death of the emperor arrived at St. Petersburg *. "Ostermann," writes Mr. Finch, "was extremely alarmed and uneasy at it. He thought, that all the princes of Europe must now maturely consider, whether the house of Austria was to be maintained entire or abandoned, for that there was no mean or middle

* Finch's dispatch of 1st November, 1740.

between the two. Above all, it was important whether France would abide by the guarantee of the Pragmatic Sanction or not. That if her politicians should determine her to the last, he however thought that all the powers of Europe should concur, unite, and co-operate, to carry the guarantee into execution.

"Another ground for Ostermann's apprehension is, that the king of Prussia seems hitherto his own minister, and to act solely by his own advice. Every negotiation between England and Russia presupposes the king of Prussia's accession to the treaty; else I (Finch) must feel myself what difficulties this court might be in, and to what *ménagement* it might be obliged.

A short time afterwards (the 9th of November) the English ambassador wrote from Paris*, "Cardinal Fleury is said to have written a very obliging letter to prince Lichtenstein, assuring him that the king of France will most conscientiously perform all the engagements into which he entered with the emperor during his life. It is thought, however, that France will take another course by which it will better attain its object; viz. by inducing certain persons to bring forward their claims till they go to war with each other; and that then France, under the specious pretext of maintaining general tranquillity, will join that party, from which it can obtain the greatest advantages, to overpower the rest; for if it were now to decide in favour of one, the other might immediately join England and its friends."

About the same time Saxony declared†, it would

* State-paper Office, France, vol. lxxxviii.

† Dispatch of Robinson, from Vienna, of 12th November. State-paper Office. Austria, vol. cxxxii.

live in the best intelligence, and observe all its engagements, with the queen of Hungary. This declaration, and those of many other courts, were indeed satisfactory, yet most of them evaded the renewal of the guarantee of the Pragmatic Sanction.

CHAPTER IX.

Prussia—Frederick II.'s new plans and resolutions—Proofs from his Letters—Letter of the Grand Duke Francis to the King, and his answer—His offers to Austria—Popularity of Maria Theresa—Complaints of the English Ambassador respecting Frederick II. —Letter from Frederick to the King of England, and his answer—Doubts and astonishment at Vienna—Serious accounts from Paris —The pacific and warlike Parties there.

In the situation of the European powers up to this time, Prussia had acted so subordinate a part that no impulse could be given by it, nor any important question be decided by its influence. On this account the court of Vienna had contented itself with a conditional acceptance of the Pragmatic Sanction by Frederick William I., in hopes of being able in time easily to remove the existing objections, or to overcome the difficulties which might arise. With all this, however, the material interests alone had been considered and attended to, but the personal relations were overlooked, and these had certainly undergone a greater change by Frederick II.'s accession to the throne than any person had anticipated.

To the title of king which had been acquired by Frederick I., Frederick William I.* had added a re-

* Frederick William I., at his death in 1740, left his successor an army of 89,090 men, consisting, according to the official lists, of 66 battalions of infantry (64,553 men); 60 squadrons of cuirassiers;

spectable power; it was the firm resolution of the new king to increase it and bring it into action. But his pretensions to Juliers, East Friesland, and Mecklenburg afforded no scope for great activity, and least of all did they hold out an opportunity of acquiring military glory which should entitle him to a distinguished place in history. Yet this was the supreme object to which Frederick aspired. He was fully sensible of the possibilities which the death of Charles VI. opened to him. The merely conditional acceptance of the Pragmatic Sanction, as well as old claims to some principalities in Silesia, offered him a welcome excuse for taking his own course. We may, however, take it for granted (on the ground of his own confessions), that even if Austria had earlier treated all these matters with the greatest prudence, and had removed all objections, the king would not have been thereby diverted from the course he had taken. The plan originated in his will, and the deductions and manifestoes drawn up and published afterwards, were merely supplementary. There was, notwithstanding, literally more right on his side than on that of the Bavarians, Saxons, and French; and Frederick's personal superiority gave him a weight, which all the other adversaries of the noble Maria Theresa wanted, and which, in spite of all objections, is in the end received in the history of the world at its full value, and creates more than it destroys.

I have alluded to Frederick II.'s testimonies regarding himself, and will at least quote some of

45 squadrons of dragoons; 9 squadrons of hussars (together 18,515); besides these, 7 garrison companies; 4 country regiments (4822), in Berlin, Magdeburg, Stettin, and Königsberg; one battalion of field artillery of 6 companies, and one battalion of garrison artillery of 4 companies.

them in this place before I proceed to the official correspondence. On the 26th of October, six days after the death of Charles VI.,* he writes to Voltaire:

"This death deranges all my pacific notions, and I believe that in the month of June, we shall have more to do with gunpowder, soldiers, and trenches, than with actresses, ballets and the theatre. It is the moment of the total change of the ancient political system: it is the stone which crushed the image composed of four metals, which Nebuchadnezzar saw."

The following passages are taken from his correspondence with Jordan:†—"Behold me at length in one of the fairest situations of my life, and in conjunctures which may lay solid foundation for my reputation. Let the envious and the ignorant talk; my plans will never be guided by them, but by glory. I love war, for the sake of glory; but if I were not a prince I should be only a philosopher. In short, in this world everybody must follow his trade, and I have a fancy to resolve to do nothing by halves. My age, the fire of the passions, the desire of glory, even curiosity, to conceal nothing from you, in a word, a secret instinct, have snatched me from the charms of repose which I enjoyed; and the satisfaction of seeing my name in the gazettes, and, in the sequel, in history, has seduced me. But for this cursed desire of glory, I assure you that I should think only of my tranquillity. What are fatigue, illness, and dangers in comparison with glory? It is so mad a passion that I cannot conceive why it does not turn the brains of everybody."

So much as a preliminary indication of Frederick's

* Œuvres posthumes, vol. ix. p. 126.

† Œuvres posthumes, vol. viii. p. 154, 155, 161, 163, 164, 210.

notions, referring the reader to what he has himself written in the history of his times, respecting the grounds of his views and resolutions. I add the following extracts from the very active diplomatic correspondence of the last months of the year 1740.

On the 29th of October, 1740, Mr. Guy Dickens writes*, that the death of the emperor had caused a great sensation at Berlin, but that there were many diverse opinions. Some expected great advantages for Prussia, and said *gaudeant bene armati!* On the 5th of November, the ambassador gives an account of military deliberations and preparations. It could not long remain concealed from him, that Frederick did not enter into the views of England, respecting the integrity of the Austrian states, and was not inclined to sacrifice himself for the idea of the balance of Europe, in which he remained in a very subordinate situation.

Accordingly Dickens writes on the 19th of November,—"We wish that this young prince's great reading, and in particular Rollin's Ancient History, which is his favourite study, may not have filled his head with notions of imitating a Cyrus or an Alexander." It was, however, uncertain whether Frederick would turn towards Cleves or Silesia.

Meantime Mr. Robinson had written from Vienna on the 9th of November the following particulars:† "As I hear the king of Prussia has already answered the grand duke's letter, and in a manner, as I am told, to the entire satisfaction of the grand duke. Mr. Borcke has likewise received, and shown me in confidence, a private letter from his court upon the

* State-paper Office, Prussia, vol. li.

† State-paper Office, Austria, vol. cxciv.

same occasion. As it came to him out of cypher, I shall send the following substance of it in the same manner. It was to express the king's satisfaction with Mr. Borcke's diligence in giving the earliest advice of the emperor's death, that he might assure the grand duke and this court, of his Prussian majesty's perfect friendship, and readiness to serve them on this important occasion; that his Prussian majesty's situation, both with respect to men and money, made his friendship not to be neglected: that he would enter into no engagements till he knew the intentions of this court; but then, this court must be quick in its resolutions, in the present imminent danger on all sides; which is so great, says Mr. Borcke's correspondent, that, to use a favourite expression of the late king of Prussia, 'a man cannot put his head out of the window without a helmet.' Hereupon followed reflections on the existing state of political affairs, and the observation that an attack by Saxony and Bavaria was at hand, unless it was prevented by gaining them in time. Mr. Borcke had also communicated this letter to the grand duke."

On the 16th of November, Mr. Robinson continues:—"The queen gains the hearts of everybody; she shows an uncommon quickness in talking, a like judgment in digesting, and a no less resolution in supporting the weightiest affairs of state. Austria desires peace upon the Continent, but if France should propose a partition in favour of Bavaria, or make the smallest demand for itself, the court of Vienna will risk all for all. Borcke said to me, in confidence, that the king of Prussia was very angry at the raillery and ridicule with which the French

treated him. It is believed here, that Frederick II. will only bring forward the question of the succession of Julius and Berg, but that his pretensions will not be easily reconciled with the demands of Saxony."

On the 29th of November and 3rd of December, Mr. Guy Dickens complains,—"Nobody here, great or small, dares make any representation to this young prince against the measures he is pursuing, though they are all sensible of the confusion which must follow. A prince who had the least regard to honour, truth, and justice, could not act the part he is going to do. But it is plain his only view was, to deceive us, and to conceal, for a while, his ambitious and mischievous designs."

On the same day, the 3rd of December, Mr. Robinson writes from Vienna,—"Some time ago the French ambassador asked Mr. Von Borcke if it was true that his master had offered 40,000 men and his treasures to this court. Mr. Borcke answered, '*contre qui, M. l'Ambassadeur?*' The king of Prussia approved of the answer, and recommended his plenipotentiary to be very polite to M. De Mirepoix, and to see him from time to time as to his Prussian majesty's attachment for the court of France, but to be entirely upon the reserve as to certain points on which he, Mr. Borcke, was instructed. His Prussian majesty going on, commended the manner in which, Mr. Borcke had writ, I had talked to this court with respect to the best intelligence and concert to be cultivated with that of Berlin, and to desire me to continue in the same good way. He* proceeded to

* This *He*, I believe, refers to the king.

expose the childishness of this court in amusing itself with expectations of France, compliments, and letters of acknowledgment: and the letter which Mr. Borcke received but yesterday, and gave me to read this morning, concludes with acquainting him that his Prussian majesty is on the point of making a perpetual and indissoluble union with the king of Great Britain."

Perhaps this was written to Mr. Von Borcke, in order, through him, to feed the hopes of the court of Vienna: perhaps too, Frederick himself still believed at that time that he should be able to make the Austrians and English agree to his demands and offers Undoubtedly he was very far from the actual conclusion of an agreement with England.

On the 5th of December, Lord Harrington wrote from London to Mr. Robinson*:—"By all our last letters from different parts, the army which the king of Prussia has assembled, is thought to be meant to invade Silesia, and hold the same for himself; though some people indeed surmise, that the steps he is taking, may be in consequence of some concert with your court; whereas on the contrary others imagine, and especially from his having drawn some part of those troops from the side of Cleves, that he has an understanding with France, and that he may mean to take Silesia, as an equivalent for Juliers and Berg."

A day before the writing of this letter (on the 4th of December), Frederick explained his plans more clearly, in an official letter to the king of England; and added as a postscript, in his own handwriting,†

* State-paper Office, Austria, vol. cxxxiii.
† State-paper Office, Royal Letters, vol. xvii.

"I should have written to your Majesty with my own hand, if I had not been overwhelmed with business. The expedition which I am going to undertake is bold (*est vive*), but it is the only means to save Germany, which the Court of Vienna is ready to seize, with France. I hope that your majesty will give me, on this occasion, marks of your friendship, of which I have received so many assurances from you, and that the perfect union of the two courts will, in all things, tend to promote their common interests."

Nobody can well doubt that Frederick himself did not believe in the plan, which, in the postscript, he falsely ascribes to the courts of Vienna and Versailles; but it is equally difficult to conceive, how he could believe that such a groundless accusation would produce the slightest effect at London.

About the same time, Robinson sent several dispatches from Vienna. On the 5th of December he writes:—"The news that Frederick may perhaps intend to attack Silesia has found too much impression here; and this court has, notwithstanding the most gracious offers, made by his Prussian majesty, of his friendship, taken some precautions in Silesia, not to be surprized. That is to say, by marching to the frontiers just as many troops as might show their diffidence of the court of Berlin, but not enough to resist any real attempt. I do not doubt the intentions of the king of Prussia are nothing less than to attack this court.* As Austria inclines to France, and sacrifices the good of Europe, Prussia will unite with England."

* Robinson looked exclusively at England and the Netherlands.

On the following day (the 6th of December), Robinson observes:—"The Austrian minister had received very alarming news from Berlin, but he explains all in his own way, as if the object were Courland and Russia.

"The grand duke said on the 10th of December that the king of Prussia was the prince in the world who piqued himself most on his honour; he would have no bad intentions against the Queen."

While hopes and apprehensions alternated in Vienna, clouds were rising in other quarters. Thus Mr. Thompson, the English ambassador at Paris, in a dispatch of the 6th of December, mentions the pretensions of Saxony, Bavaria, and Spain*. "Mr. Wasner, the Austrian chargé d'affaires (he says in another place), tells me that everybody in Vienna is charmed with the new sovereign, and that she has already received the most friendly congratulations on her accession to the throne from the kings of Poland, Prussia, and Sardinia. But," adds Thompson, "the motion of troops which the king of Prussia is making puzzles most people here to know the meaning of it.

"Mr. Wasner (dispatch of the 7th December) tells me that he still advises his court to be upon its guard, and to endeavour to put themselves in a situation to be able to act upon occasion without being a burthen to their friends. He has assured them over and over, that there is no dependence to be had upon the friendship of this court, notwithstanding all their professions; and that, on the contrary, he has great reason to believe, that France

* State-paper Office, France, vol. lxxxviii.

will traverse their schemes as much as ever she can. First, because they know the grand duke does not like the French; in the next place, out of envy, that a person who is descended of a younger branch of their family, should be preferred before the elder, and that the duke of Lorraine, who had formerly paid homage to the French king, should for the future have rank before him; and lastly, for his partiality to the English, which was so remarkable, while his highness was at Leghorn, that it was complained of. Not that he (Wasner) believes the cardinal will enter into a war, if he can possibly avoid it, because he knows him to be naturally a coward; but that if he can find means, underhand, to disappoint the duke of Lorraine, and to filch some little thing for himself, he will certainly do it."

CHAPTER X.

Frederick's Preparation for War—He and the English Ambassador on the Pragmatic Sanction, and the Balance of Europe—on the Observance of Treaties—Pretensions of Frederick to Silesia—Anger and Complaints of the Austrian Patriots—Offers and Demands of Frederick—Gotter's Audience of the Grand Duke—his Answer—Negotiations in Berlin—Account given by the Grand Duke—Activity of Robinson—Remonstrances to Frederick.

THE six weeks that followed the death of Charles VI. were employed by Frederick in preparing, in every way, for war. The other powers very naturally urged him, with unceasing earnestness, to explain himself more clearly respecting his plans. Mr. Guy Dickens relates the following particulars

of what passed on this subject in an audience which he had on the 6th of December.*

"As I laid the greatest stress on the indivisibility of the Austrian monarchy, the king asked me what I meant by this? I replied, 'The maintenance of the Pragmatic Sanction.' The king—'Do you intend to support it? I hope not, for it is not my intention.'—'England is bound to it, and so is your majesty.'—To which he replied, he had taken no such engagements, and if his father had, he was not obliged by them, nor could he stick to any which he had not himself contracted or ratified."

"I endeavoured," continues the ambassador, "to prove the contrary, and observed that England and Holland would wonder at the measures which he took at a moment when he desired to join with them, and had made friendly proposals. I asked him what I should write to England?

"When I mentioned this, the king grew red in the face, and said, he knew I could not yet have instructions to ask him that question; and if I had done it by order, he had an answer ready for me; that we had no right to inquire into his designs, and that he had never asked us any questions about our armaments at sea, and that all he did was to wish that we may not be beaten by the Spaniards.

"I replied, that I had not asked out of mere curiosity, but purely out of the sincere regard that I had always shown for his majesty's welfare, and that I should be sorry to see him engaged in any undertaking which he might have reason to regret afterwards. Frederick opened himself a little, and

* State-paper Office, Prussia, vol. li.

said that he had nothing but the public good in view; that he had weighed with the greatest attention the plans he had formed, examined all the advantages and disadvantages which could result from them with respect to himself or the public; after which he thought he had nothing else to do, but to support them with vigour.

"The king having added some particulars respecting his plans and demands, said, Austria, as a power, is necessary against the Turks, but in Germany she does not need to be so great but that three electors may be able to oppose her. He found it was our notion in England, as well as in France, to bring other princes under our tuition, but he would be led by neither. We were like the Athenians, who, when Philip of Macedon was ready to invade them, spent their time in haranguing; and at last gave me to understand (on my alluding to the aid and mediation of England in another direction), that he had not much at heart his pretensions towards the Rhine, being sensible that his aggrandizement in those parts would always give jealousy to the Dutch, whereas neither they nor England could take any umbrage at the acquisitions he makes on this side."

It cannot be known how the king may have perhaps expressed himself, in the warmth of conversation, respecting the observance of treaties, but that he by no means made it depend exclusively on the life and death of princes, is sufficiently manifest from other circumstantial discussions in his works. As there are cases in private life, in which the letter of contracts may be departed from, nay, in which they may be entirely dissolved, the same occurs also

in public affairs. Only in the former there are tribunals which decide the questions submitted to them according to general rules, determine the limits of the deviation, and give it authority; whereas there is no superior tribunal for princes and states, and they therefore pronounce their own acquittal, according to their conscience, or their will. It is for history to confirm or reject these decisions, or at least, in doubtful cases, impartially to weigh the arguments on both sides. It is often considered as the best mode of proceeding, to detach the individual case in question from all others; as it were, to anatomise it; but in my opinion, by this dismembering, this destroying of all connection, this disregard of causes and effects, we find only what is subordinate, insignificant, and in the end false, not what is active, influential, and decisive. If justice had been according to the letter, for Gesler against the Swiss, for Philip II. against the Netherlands, for England against North America, for Napoleon in 1813 against Prussia—it was however but "the letter which killeth." It was, therefore, justly thrown aside, and regard was had to the spirit, which gives life to nations and conclaves, calls forth great sentiments and deeds, fully proves the right to independent existence, and reveals the superintendence of a supreme Providence.

The conduct of Frederick II. was far from appearing in so clear a light in the year 1740. For if we will allow that the conditional acceptance of the Pragmatic Sanction did not bind him to act in favour of Austria; that this power expressed itself equivocally with respect to the succession to Juliers, and that the claim of Prussia to some principalities in

Silesia was well founded, yet the king did not confine himself to these limits, was not actuated by these motives, and before he had given proofs of his great character, his actions appeared to most people as the result of egotism alone. We are, therefore, very far from blaming the grief and the anger of the Austrian patriots of those days, though a retrospective view of the last hundred years proves to us, that Providence had greater ends to accomplish, through Frederick, and the exaltation of Prussia, than could at that time be conceived or presaged. All the works of true genius in arts, science, and politics, are at first a mystery, till congenial spirits exclaim—*numine afflatur!* and in the end, that which was inconceivable and rejected, becomes universally acknowledged and admired.

At that time nobody was more painfully affected by the course of events, than the Austrian minister Bartenstein. According to Mr. Robinson's dispatch of the 10th of December, he said to the Dutch ambassador, "never was a character like that of the king of Prussia; he had foreseen and foretold it, ever since he was employed by the late emperor to write to the late king of Prussia, which saved his Prussian majesty's life. Such dissimulation! such a heart! That he should discover himself too, at a time when everything was so peaceable everywhere else. For, in one word, the queen has no one power in Europe to fear, but the king of Prussia!"

Mr. Robinson still considered all these notions and apprehensions to be foolish, but was soon convinced to the contrary. Four days later (on the 14th of December), he writes:—"The grand duke said to me, 'you will believe at last that the king of

Prussia is coming to Silesia?' 'Yes! but I hope as a friend.'—'If he comes as an enemy,' continued the grand duke, 'he will get nothing from us; and if he comes with an intent to force us to enter into joint measures with him, to aggrandize himself elsewhere, the method is the worst that he could have taken.'"

"Mr. Von Borcke communicated to me an order of the 7th of December, to the effect that he should take an audience of the grand duke, to assure the court of his Prussian majesty's most absolute and entire friendship; to conjure the queen and his highness not to be alarmed; that time would show the extent of the goodness of his majesty's intentions; that his entrance into Silesia was inevitable —nay, necessary for the balance of Europe, for the preservation of the very constitution of the empire, and for the safety of the house of Austria in particular. That for all these several great ends, he was ready to concert the properest measures with this court, the maritime powers, and Russia; and to give a further proof of such his intentions, as well as to calm any uneasiness of this court, he had written and sent to be presented by him (Mr. Borcke) two letters, one for the queen, the other for his highness.

"When Mr. Borcke (dispatch of the 19th December) presented the king's letter to the grand duke, the latter said, this was the greatest riddle in the world, and he conjured the king of Prussia not to proceed in this manner. Many believed that the whole is merely intended to induce the court of Vienna to make certain concessions with respect to Juliers and Berg."

The author of the Anti-machiavel could not expect

to remove all difficulties by bare words and petty arts. It was necessary to enter into the facts. Accordingly, the Prussian ambassador Von Gotter had a long audience of the grand duke on the 18th of December, respecting which his highness gave the following account to Mr. Robinson* :—"Mr. Gotter said, he came with safety for the house of Austria in one hand, and the imperial crown for the grand duke in the other; that his master's men and money were at the queen's service, and would be the more agreeable, as it was supposed she was so much in need of both, in a time when she could trust to nobody, but so considerable a prince as his Prussian majesty, and the allies that he proposed to bring along with him into her interest. Those allies were the maritime powers and Russia, which he offered to engage in the common cause. That, with such a union of Brandenburg, Austria, England, Russia, and Holland, his Prussian majesty, the great promoter and soul of such an alliance, was the only one who had anything to fear by the situation of his states; so that, certain as it was that he should be a loser on one side, it was but just that he should gain something on the other. To encourage him, therefore, to go on with so great an enterprise, the queen could not give him less than the whole duchy of Silesia!

"I humbly leave your lordship to judge of the grand duke's astonishment; he told me himself, and I know it from others, that he kept his temper, notwithstanding several presumptuous and threatening declarations which fell from Mr. Gotter, in

* Dispatch of the 21st December, 1740.

that blustering, noisy manner, which makes the chief qualification of the king of Prussia's grand marshal; and whose elevation to that post was as great a surprise, to all who had known him and seen him here creep up from the lowest scale of life, as his present mission to the same court is, upon so extraordinary an occasion. To hear him speak, said the grand duke, one would have thought his master in full march to Constantinople with his invincible troops. Nobody was so firm in his resolutions as his Prussian majesty; enter he must and would into Silesia; once entered, he would and must proceed; and if not secured by the immediate cession of Silesia, the same men and money were equally at the service of Saxony and Bavaria.

"The duke answered, that nothing could be more salutary than the king's plan; but the mischief was, that he reasoned very wrong, from such good principles; that it was the king himself who had nothing to fear in the uniting so many considerable powers; whereas, the queen had the most, if not everything to fear. Not that her majesty for that reason declined entering into the king's plan; it was, on the contrary, approved here, and, for that very reason, this court, the duke said, had upon the first overture of his Prussian majesty's general profession of friendship, and at his own request, sent immediately a minister of confidence, with full instructions to negotiate at Berlin itself, whatever should be found reasonable and practicable for that prince's satisfaction. But instead of entering into any business with that minister, or making the least demand or pretension upon the queen, the king marched a considerable body of troops into Silesia,

and then only made a peremptory demand of the best province that belonged to her, and which, were it in her power to part with anything, was that which she could the least divest herself of. But it was neither in her power to grant away what was so strongly and indivisibly entailed, nor was she in so low a condition as to treat with an enemy while he was in her dominions.

"Whereupon the Duke expatiated to Mr. Gotter upon the wide scene of confusion which the king of Prussia's impatience was opening. It might be equally disadvantageous to him and others, and might have been spared by the king's proceeding only in the common forms of business, and giving himself time to learn the true sentiments of this court to him; not indeed to gratify unjust views, but in serving him in everything that was reasonable and possible.

"Mr. Gotter answered, there was nothing then for him to do, and he would go back that very day. His highness said, Are your troops actually in Silesia? Gotter replied, they must certainly be there. The duke said, Go then, return to your master, and tell him that while he has a man in Silesia, we have not a word to say to him. We will perish first, or save ourselves at any rate or hazard; but if either he is not entered and will abstain from entering, or if entering, will return, we will immediately treat with him at Berlin. Botta has already instructions; others shall be sent to him this very day, and there are means of gratifying the king, without his pressing to extort from us what is not in our power to grant.

"Mr. Gotter seemed to mollify upon this, and under pretext of excusing himself towards his

master for sending a courier, instead of bringing back the duke's answer desired his highness to give him as much in writing, which the duke refused, as inconsistent with the queen's and his dignity, while the king was supposed to be in her estates. Whereupon Gotter promised to send a courier, though protesting it was to no purpose; and accordingly, two couriers have been sent, one from this court to Berlin, and one from Gotter to the king, wherever he might be met: but the latter did not go till yesterday morning at the break of day.

"The duke told me further, that surely there were never any man's hopes so unseasonably blasted as his. He had himself formed the same idea as the king of Prussia. He had flattered himself the maritime powers, and particularly the king, had the same opinion of the necessity of such a great alliance as that in question. He knew the danger which the queen would run, and as to the hopes founded on England and Holland there was too much ground for alarm to counterbalance them. If that should not be compassed, this court would first employ every subject that could bear arms, the very gold vessels from the altar, to resist the first impetuosity of the king, and afterwards save themselves when and how they could.

"I endeavoured," says Robinson, "to convince Borcke and Gotter, by all possible arguments, of the absurdity of that plan, and staid with the gentlemen nearly three hours; sifted and turned them in every light; heard a thousand particulars from Gotter of the genius and humour of his master. Young, rash, presumptuous, ungovernable; in a

word, the strange stmixture of ambition and avarice; and what was the worst, these two engrafted upon so many good points, as to appear virtues to the king himself.

"Gotter himself does not approve of his master's proceeding; he protests, he said as much at Berlin to the king with the greatest liberty; and surely if he spoke with as much liberty as he has written (for I have seen all his dispatches), one cannot desire a better picture of the master who can suffer to be so conversed with, nor of the minister who can do it in such a manner. In a word, nothing is omitted by the two ministers, Borcke and Gotter, to show the king all the rashness, the injustice, and ill consequences, both to himself and all Europe, of his present attempt."

An intimation from Prussia, that the king would be satisfied with part of Silesia, was not attended to in Vienna, so long as Frederick did not desist from his attack. Robinson of his own authority offered the mediation of the maritime powers which, however, did not interrupt the progress of events.

CHAPTER XI.

On the conduct of Austria—Opinions in Petersburg and Paris—Pretensions of Spain to the Austrian succession—Entrance of the Prussians into Silesia—New Proposals of Frederick—Gotter's audience of the Grand Duke—Deliberations and Answers of the Austrians—Breaking off of the Negotiations—Letter of Frederick to the King of England—Answer—Frederick to the Grand Duke—Bartenstein's Principles—England's Mediation between Austria and Prussia—Frederick's further Proposals—Frederick to Lord Hyndford—Battle at Molwitz—Frederick to Podewils.

On a nearer examination of the preceding narrative some minor questions and doubts present themselves. Did Frederick, in order to alarm—to strike awe—commission his ambassador to use such bold, threatening, arrogant language, or did the latter, conformably with his own character, act in this manner without positive direction? or did the grand duke, who was naturally offended, represent what he heard in stronger colours? were the communications of the Prussian ambassadors to the English complete and sincere, or did they wish in this instance also to deceive and to gain time?

Now that we are acquainted with the events of the succeeding years, it may be asked, with respect to the main point, why did not Austria voluntarily accept the proposals, to which it afterwards was compelled to agree? Why did it not spare itself ruinous wars? Why did it not gain in Frederick a powerfully ally? I answer, there was at that time no prophet who could see into futurity, or if any one had prophesied, he would, like Cassandra, have met

with no credit. Even the most timid could not, without disgracing himself, propose, at that time, that one of the finest provinces should be given up without a struggle, by the ancient, powerful, imperial house, to the newly made king—the former Margrave of Brandenburg. And, after making this acquisition with such unexpected ease, would not the ambitious claimant have required still more—would not all who were eager for aggrandizement have been thereby encouraged to fall upon the inheritance of Charles VI. as an easy prey? The king's declarations, as if it depended upon him to conclude great alliances for Austria, as if he had the principal powers, as it were, in his train—were considered as vain boastings; the more so, because the court of Vienna could certainly depend upon England and Holland, and had reason at that time to believe itself secure of France and Russia. Thus the most urgent remonstrances to Frederick* were made by Russia to induce him to desist from his plans against Austria;* and Louis XV. said of him on this occasion,—"This man is mad."†

An ambassadorial dispatch from Paris of the 17th December says:—"As to the march of the Prussian troops to Silesia, everybody seems to be in amazement about it; they have never heard of any pretensions his Prussian majesty had to any part of the Austrian succession. Frederick William I. had guaranteed it; there was no dispute between the two courts; Frederick II. declared his resolution of supporting these engagements to the utmost, ever

* Dispatch from St. Petersburg of 20th December. State-paper Office, Russia, vol. xxviii.

† Cet homme là est fol! Dispatch from Paris of the 24th December. State-paper Office, France, vol. lxxxviii.

since the emperor's death; every one of which circumstances contributes to make this step the more unaccountable. Prince Lichtenstein and Wasner are quite startled at it, and seem to apprehend the worst without knowing for what reason.

"Spain is preparing to begin war against Austria in Italy. Here, in Paris, the pretensions were not contradicted, only they declared their inability to support them. Cardinal Fleury said to the Spanish ambassador, what he had heard of the bad state of the Spanish army, that the men were naked and the officers spunged upon the convents. Campo Florido owned this to be in a manner true, but said at the same time, that, in such a case as the present, Spain would not want money; to which the cardinal replied: Let Spain begin by putting herself in a posture of defence, and then we shall see!" This was however a matter of great difficulty, for when mention was made in Spain of imposing a new tenth,* the people were extremely incensed, and many said, a war was of no use whatever to the country, and the only object of it was to provide for the queen's younger son, Don Philip.

Meantime the Prussians had entered the Silesian territory on the 23rd of December,† and, as they said, as friends. At the beginning they paid for corn and bread, gave paper receipts, thereby deceived some,‡ paralysed the exertions of others, but incensed those who looked upon all this as deception and delusion.

At the same time Frederick caused new proposals

* State-paper Office, France, vol. lxxxix. Dispatch of 4th January, 1741. † Œuvr. posth. i. 136.

‡ Dispatch from Vienna of 28th December.

to be made, more equitable than the first, and upon which perhaps an agreement might have been made, if they had been brought forward earlier, and in a temperate manner by negotiation. But now the court of Vienna was justly indignant, and would not, for the sake of its honour, suffer anything to be extorted from it by a hostile attack. The particulars are given in a dispatch of Robinson, dated Vienna, the 4th January, 1741.*

"Gotter," he says, "had on the 1st of January another audience of the grand duke. He offered in general, money, men, the imperial crown, and conveniences for the court; security of the Pragmatic Sanction, and a perpetual alliance, to be fortified and confirmed by the additional union of England and Russia. 'And it is for all Silesia,' said the duke, 'that you make this offer?' 'That would be too much, and Schwiebus will be too little,' answered Gotter. 'How, at such a distance, shall we come together?' said the duke. To which Gotter answered: 'It is neither for all Silesia nor for one half of it, but for a good part indeed; and that, the nearest to the Prussian frontiers. This too, the king will pay your price for, by an immediate purchase or by an apparent loan.' To explain the last expression he proposed, that such a part of Silesia as he hinted at, might (not to appear to infringe the Pragmatic Sanction) be left to Prussia upon the foot of a public mortgage; and in virtue of a secret article, whereby this court should promise, that whenever the grand duke should be emperor, and everything should be quite pacified, then, and not till then, the king should have a fresh assurance, by way of treaty, that this

* State-paper Office, vol. cxxxv.

family should never redeem this part of Silesia; for which the king would lay down a sum of three or four millions, as it should be agreed upon, and keep a garrison there of five or six hundred men only.

"To this, over and above all that had been hinted before, Gotter added, that besides these, this court might make use of the king's forces for the preservation of the tranquillity of the empire. The king would keep ready 10,000 men, for either Italy or the Low Countries, as occasion should require. The duke gave no other encouragement to this proposal, when pressed by these gentlemen to let them know, after all that had been offered, whether the king's plan was entirely to be despaired of, than by saying, that he 'hoped not so, neither.' And when they asked, further, leave to apply to the minister, he consented, if they thought proper, to Count Zinzendorf.

"The next morning, Zinzendorf and Stahremberg were shut up with the duke for three hours in his closet. In the evening the Prussian ministers went to Count Zinzendorf, when things were opened in the same manner as to the duke. The chancellor insisted upon their giving as much in writing, which they refused, for fear, as they said, of being betrayed to France. Whereupon the chancellor contented himself with taking down some loose minutes of the proposals, and Gotter offered to return the next day with his full powers and all his written instructions, of which he, the chancellor, or any person to be trusted, might take down before him such extracts as he, the chancellor, pleased. This was accordingly done yesterday. But they refused what Zinzendorf insisted on, which was, to name specially

what they meant, by a good part of Silesia; and only left it to this court to make what use it pleased of the particular information it now had, of the true intentions of the king. The Prussian ambassador communicated all to me, and requested my support. From Zinzendorf's expressions, I infer, that the court of Vienna is much shaken by the offers of Prussia.

"Bartenstein opposes every agreement with Prussia, and reports, that the king has required that war shall be declared against France, and yet this court has nothing to rely on but France. He is French mad."

A dispatch of Robinson's of the 7th of January, gives further particulars:—

"The king has advanced further into Silesia, and has taken possession of Breslau. The grand duke complains; 1, that the powers of the Prussian ambassador are insufficient; 2, that they have not said, what is to be understood by a good part of Silesia; 3, that the notion of a loan and pledge properly came from Gotter himself; 4, that every kind of cession dissolved the Pragmatic Sanction and invited other pretensions; 5, that the Prussians were in the Austrian states.

"From the grand duke I went to the Prussian ambassador, and discovered, but too plainly, the defect in Gotter's power, the uncertainty of the success of his own project of a mortgage, his inability to explain what was meant by a good part of Silesia, and, in one word, from the perusal he gave me of a long instruction he had received that morning from his court, wherein, many things from

hence were misunderstood, and many things from thence misrepresented, the absolute impossibility of proceeding upon any immediate negotiation.

"The last instructions were dated from Berlin, the 30th past, in answer to Gotter's first letter from Vienna, and accompanied with a short letter from the king, of the 3rd of January, at Breslau. It is a pity, that the king has no minister with him; and the negotiations are carried on by way of Berlin, while he is rapidly advancing.

"The most remarkable thing that happened at the conference with the Austrian ministers was, that we were told, as if Mr. Borcke had let appear, as if his first instructions, for the demand of all Silesia, had been dated the 15th of November, but which, he said, he had orders not to open, till a certain day given; and this day was found to correspond with that time that the king intended to enter Silesia. With respect to this, Mr. Gotter had corrected him, by pretending that he should not have said *open* but *read*. Whereupon, I took the liberty to remark that this discovery might serve to dissipate a great many reports; for if the king had, so early as the 15th of November, let his envoy here know the secret intention of demanding Silesia, and of invading that province, the thought must at least have been conceived some days before; and consequently from the 28th of October, when the king heard first of the Emperor's death, he could not have had time to concert with this court the invasion of Silesia, as was supposed in France, nor with France as was supposed in Holland, nor much less with the king of England, as seemed to be surmised here.

"In the latest instructions of the 26th of December,

the king says, he will be content with a good part of Silesia. He has besides commissioned Mr. Von Gotter, to say verbally, that on all occasions in which he may be able to assist the queen of Hungary to preserve the grandeur of her house, and to indemnify herself for the *bagatelle* which she is going to lose on this occasion, he will do it with all his heart."

On the 5th of January, an Austrian answer to the following effect was published:—"When the king invaded Silesia, all was tranquil, and no danger existing; but in such a case, even the laws of the empire bind every member of the empire to protect the party unjustly attacked; how much more binding, then, is the guarantee of the Pragmatic Sanction! But if such ties are not valid, on what security can the house of Austria depend? An alliance between the maritime powers, Austria and Prussia, already exists; the intention of those allies is not to deprive the queen of Hungary of a part of her states, but to preserve them entire and inviolate. The queen will not cede all Silesia, nor a part of it, but will renew the alliance, provided that the Pragmatic Sanction be not directly or indirectly infringed, that the right of no third party be violated, and that the Prussian army immediately quit her dominions. In her opinion this is the only method compatible with equity and justice, the fundamental laws of the empire, as well as the welfare and balance of all Europe. For the same reason, this is the only way which is conformable with the real glory of the king of Prussia; and the queen does not hesitate earnestly to entreat him to adopt it; nay, she conjures him by all the considerations which may make impression on the heart of a great prince."

Though all the proposals of Prussia were in fact wholly rejected by this answer, Mr. Robinson used all his efforts to prove to Mr. Gotter* how the negotiations might be continued, and what was to be done. Gotter, however, despaired of convincing his master, who, without an immediate advantage, would look upon all the rest as so much wind.

Gotter thought of going on the following day to the king, but the physicians would not permit it. When the Austrian ministers heard of the delay, they thought that the illness was feigned, and the chancellor sent to speak with Mr. Borcke: he too it seems had a fever, and desired to be excused. Whereupon he received a letter from the chancellor, he was to take his measures to leave this place in a few days.

Robinson was dissatisfied with this turn of things, and thought† that Austria might have expressed itself more clearly; have made the king of Prussia some positive offer, and, as Gotter wished, have designated the part of Silesia, which it was willing to cede in exchange for other advantages. Nay, when the king, by the intervention of the elector of Mayence, demanded Liegnitz, Wohllan, and Brieg, they gave him an answer similar to the preceding, offering the king a kind of an act of oblivion and a promise not to insist upon damages!

The court of Vienna erred in not stopping at what appeared to be literally right, or a point of honour,

* Dispatch of the 11th of January, 1741. State-paper Office, Austria, vol. cxxxv.

† Dispatch of the 17th of January.

and in its not unnatural excitement forgot what policy at that moment required or imposed. Least of all was it well advised to use any expressions towards a prince like Frederick, that resembled ridicule or contempt. Accordingly he said to the English ambassador at Berlin,* he would sooner perish than desert from his undertaking; he would not have other powers imagine he would be intimidated by menaces, and whoever should do it, or think of more effectual measures, he would show them, he was readier than they to give the first box on the ear. In case of extremity he would join France, and would kick and bite on all sides, and lay everything waste before them.

On the 30th of January, 1741, Frederick wrote from Berlin to the king of England:†—"I am charmed to see by the letter which your majesty has just written to me, that I was not mistaken in the confidence which I placed in you, from the favourable manner in which you speak of my enterprize in Silesia. Having had no alliance with anybody, I have not been able to open my mind to everybody, but seeing the good intentions of your majesty, I consider you already as my ally, from whom I ought in future to keep nothing hid or secret.

"I must then inform you that I have taken possession of all Silesia (except two wretched forts, into

* Dispatches of the 31st of January and 4th of February, 1741. State-paper Office, Prussia, vol. lii.

† State-paper Office, Royal Letters, vol. vii. I have, it is true, had only a copy in my hands, but from various reasons am fully persuaded that the original was by Frederick II. himself. This is also indicated by the mistakes in the orthography.

which the officers of the queen of Bohemia have *very imprudently* thrown some troops, and which cannot hold out); that I have driven Mr. Braun into Moravia, and that if I had the smallest intention of overthrowing the house of Austria, it would have depended only on myself, to have advanced to Vienna. But not having any right, except to a part of Silesia, I have stopped where its frontiers end. Far from desiring to disturb Europe, I pretend to nothing, except that regard be paid to my incontestable rights, and that justice be done me, without my being obliged to push things to extremity, and to keep no measure in future with the court of Vienna.

"I infinitely value the friendship of your majesty and the common interest of the Protestant princes, which require, that those who are oppressed on account of their religion, shall be supported. The tyrannical government under which the Silesians have groaned is dreadful, and the barbarity of the Catholics towards them is not to be expressed. If these Protestants lose me, they have no resource left. I believe that the reasons which I have just given your majesty are sufficient, but I think I see still stronger ones, in the interest of your majesty; for if ever you wish to gain a faithful and ever constant ally, this is the moment. Our interest, our religion, our blood, are the same, and it would be melancholy if we were seen to act in a manner contrary to each other, by which other jealous neighbours would not fail to profit. It would be still more melancholy to oblige me to concur in the great designs of France, which, however, I have no intention of doing, unless I am forced; whereas at present, your majesty finds me most advantageously inclined for your

interest, ready to enter into your views, and to act in all things in concert with you. I am, with the most perfect esteem, your good and faithful brother and friend,

"FREDERICK.

"I forgot to inform you that I have concluded a defensive alliance with Russia."

The king of England in his answer exhorts him to a speedy reconciliation, in which he will willingly co-operate, as far as alliances and engagements permit. The loose, undiplomatic manner in which Frederick mentions his alliance with Russia, had doubtless been thought singular in London. We therefore find at the conclusion of the English answer; "Postscript: I also thank you for informing me of your alliance with Russia."

"After the departure of Gotter from Vienna, the king wrote a letter in his own hand to the grand duke, though directed to his highness by another hand,* wherein, after repeated assurances of his friendship for the queen and the grand duke, he concluded by saying, that his heart had no share in the mischief which his army was doing to the court. The duke's answer was, that whatever might be the fortune of the present war, he should be always the king's friend.

"Mr. Bartenstein lays down for a first principle that the attempt to rectify the king, without ruffling him, is as much lost trouble as washing a Moor white; that his father's 12,000 men upon the Rhine

* Robinson's dispatch of the 22nd of February. State-paper Office, Austria, vol. cxxxv.

did more harm than good; that his friendship would be worse than his enmity, particularly under the present circumstances of the imperial election; inasmuch as the gaining of his vote, would be an absolute loss of that of Treves; and the least reconciliation with him, an absolute alienation from the king of Poland. Prussia, he said, ought rather to be entirely disarmed."

Such language and wishes may be well excused in a warm friend of his country, but they were not becoming a statesman who ought to understand the present, to look into the future, and to distinguish what is possible from that which is impossible.

Lord Harrington indeed wrote to Robinson, that if remonstrances did not avail it was intended to drive the king from Silesia by arms; but the intention was not the execution, and direct assistance from England was not to be obtained. Accordingly Lord Harrington immediately adds, that if Austria wished to make an arrangement with Prussia, England was ready to lend its mediation.

The English government was more and more impelled to take this course, the more attentively it considered the situation of all the European powers, of which I shall presently speak at length. As early as March it gave advice, at Vienna, to agree with the king of Prussia, which advice was rejected with disgust.* Any cession to Prussia, it was alleged, would lead to general demands and a universal war. They confidently hoped to overcome Prussia, and to derive great advantages from the changes in Russia.

* Dispatch of 29th of March. State-paper Office, Austria, vol. cxxxvi.

In April, England again urged, at Vienna, the necessity * of a reconciliation with Prussia; because otherwise a war with France would be doubly dangerous.—In vain.

Hereupon the English court applied, through Lord Hyndford, to the king of Prussia.† The latter answered, that he would willingly settle with Austria in the manner already proposed; and then most zealously come to an understanding respecting everything that he had offered from the very beginning, as well for the consolidation of the house of Austria as of the liberties of Europe. And as, notwithstanding the advantageous offers made to him, he had not entered into any engagements with France, and was at full liberty to accept equitable conditions, which the king of England might obtain for him, from the court of Vienna, he earnestly requested him to proceed with the greatest possible expedition in this affair.

At Vienna they were still convinced that the pacific party in France would preponderate; or if not, it would then be time enough to make an arrangement with Prussia. Thus all the representations of England were of no avail. On the 6th of May Austria again refused any cession to Prussia; and king Frederick declared, that he perceived with the greatest regret that those serious endeavours had been fruitless. On the 10th of May he wrote to Lord Hyndford,‡—"As it was not for me to make more advances than I have done, without being assured of

* Dispatch of 17th April.

† Dispatches of March and May.

‡ State-paper Office, Austria, vol. cxxxvi.

the sentiments of the court of Vienna, I shall wait patiently for its answer."

Frederick had the more reason to say this, as he had gained, on the 10th of April, the battle of Molwitz, and was in possession of the greatest part of Silesia; and in the increasing intricacy of the affairs of Europe, his influence on the result became more and more decisive.

On the 12th of May, 1741,* the king wrote from Molwitz to his minister, Podewils :—" I send you, in very bad French, the letter of a very good German. You will find in it the reasoning of a violent patriot, but I think that it will be a document capable of making an impression upon a plenipotentiary. We have to do, on one hand, with the most obstinate people in Europe; and on the other, with the most ambitious. As the part of an honest man among rogues is a very dangerous matter, and to be cunning among cheats is a desperate attempt, the success of which is very equivocal, what is to be done? War and negotiation. This is precisely what your very humble servant and his minister are doing. If anything is to be gained by being honest men, we shall be so; and if it is necessary to cheat, let us be rogues. I am, with esteem, dear Podewils, your faithful friend."

The last words do not indeed sound as if they had been written by the author of the Anti-Machiavel; but then they are merely uttered in jest, and the serious question was only, on what side Prussia should place itself in this decisive crisis, and how it

* State-paper Office, Prussia, vol. liv.

should shake off the subordinate character to which it had hitherto been confined, and acquire an independent existence.

CHAPTER XII.

RUSSIA.—The Regent Anne—The Czar Iwan—Winterfeld in Russia—Münnich's power, arrogance, and dismissal—Bestucheff's false accusations against Biron.—SWEDEN—The Diet—Parties—Corruption—The Queen—War between Sweden and Russia—The alternate declarations of France respecting the Pragmatic Sanction—New plans of France and Spain—Project of a Treaty between the two Powers—The Queen—Distress and discontent in Spain.

AFTER having communicated various particulars relative to the affairs of Austria and Prussia, up to May 1741, it seems necessary to go back to other European powers. We will begin with the dispatches from St. Petersburg.

Biron was overthrown, Anne and her husband at the head of affairs, Münnich the most influential minister, and the Princess Elizabeth (on account of her pretensions to the throne) guarded and flattered at the same time. On the 20th of December the ambassador Finch writes:*—"The day before yesterday was the Princess Elizabeth's birth-day. The grand duchess Anne presented her with bracelets; the infant Czar Iwan sent her a gold snuff-box with the Russian eagle upon it; and the salt-office received orders to pay her 40,000 rubles. The king of Prussia has sent hither Major Winterfeld, who

* State-paper Office, Russia, vol. xxviii.

has married Münnich's step-daughter." On the 30th December the ambassador continues:—"Münnich is inclined to the opinion that Austria should in some way satisfy and gain Prussia." Besides the reasons arising from the affair itself, others, to which the field-marshal is not indifferent, may have co-operated. The king of Prussia gave his son-in-law, Malzahn, a colonel's commission, and sent him a diamond ring, which he had worn himself, and to his son he gave Gieben (?) an estate on the Oder.

The prince of Brunswick, on the other hand, is dissatisfied that his generalissimo is an empty title, and he is but little consulted and attended to; while the violent, hated Münnich directs everything. The prince said * he was under many obligations to Münnich, but it did not follow that he was to act the grand vizier; and if he consulted only his own inordinate ambition and the natural violence of his temper, he might by his own folly draw on his own ruin.

The more Münnich inclined to Prussia, and gave the king occasion to add to his letter to the king of England the postscript respecting an alliance with Russia, the more zealously did other parties endeavour to counteract it; respecting which Frederick gives sufficient intimations in the "History of his Times."

On the 3rd and 7th of March, Finch writes from St. Petersburg:—"Field-marshal Münnich is dismissed. When Löwenwolde brought him the message, he replied, that 'he looked upon this dismission to be the greatest favour the regent could

* Dispatch of 10th of February, 1741.

bestow on him, and he received it with the most perfect gratitude and submission.' His family was not so composed as he; and when countess Münnich took leave of the prince of Brunswick with tears in her eyes, her husband said, 'Madam, I hope you will not express any signs of sorrow on this great mark of his highness' grace and favour, which ought to give you as great joy and satisfaction as it does me.'

"The regent said, 'that Münnich had overthrown the duke of Courland more out of ambition than from attachment to her; that therefore, though she might reap the benefits of the treachery, she could not esteem the traitor. There was no enduring the field-marshal's overbearing temper any longer, since, contrary to her express and repeated orders, he had boldness enough to contradict, on several occasions, those of her husband. That he had too much ambition, restless temper, and enterprizing genius to be trusted. That he should go to his estates in the Ukraine, and there end his days quietly if he pleased.'

"Information that the duke of Courland is most rigorously * treated, has reached the regent, and Münnich's fall has afforded the duke the first consolation. It is expected that the duke will open a scene by which it will plainly appear, that the author of his ruin (Münnich) was the first projector of his regency; who alone suggested to him that thought, and animated him to accept it, engaged to carry it into execution, and to support him in it."

Four days afterwards (on the 14th March) Finch

* Dispatch of 10th of March.

writes, that "Münnich still remains in Petersburg, and his family, near the regent, causes uneasiness among his adversaries; many think he will either regain his ground, or lose more.

"Bestucheff has brought the most violent accusations against the duke of Courland, and they have been confronted together. The duke denies all; so, waving the ordinary method of torture, which must have been employed on this occasion, the duke said, that he would own everything laid to his charge to be true, if Bestucheff would now confirm it, as he would answer for it to God at the last day. The duke said this in so solemn a manner, and with so assured a countenance, that the whole commission was struck; and the other, being seized with a violent and convulsive trembling, fell on his knees, and cried that he could not stand this, but must own the truth, and ask God's and the duke's pardon. He confessed that he had falsely charged that prince, upon an insinuation and assurance of the field-marshal, that this was the only way to save his own life, honour, and family. The affair took such a turn, that the prince of Brunswick said, the duke was no more guilty than he himself was; nor had done any one thing, which any body else in his place would not have done."

Amidst all these domestic intrigues foreign affairs attracted much attention, especially the increasing misunderstanding between Russia and Sweden. I extract the following from the official dispatches:—

On the 14th of November, 1740, the English ambassador in Stockholm complains* of the increas-

* State-paper Office, Sweden, vol. lxxviii.

ing influence of the French ambassador on the king of Sweden. That the English government would not hazard greater sums in the present instance without certain hopes of success; nay, that England would not even pay half of the money hitherto required, because Russia had greater interest in avoiding a war.

On the 9th of December, the ambassador writes, "The speaker of the peasants has engaged himself to be our friend for the value of 100 ducats that he has already touched. The majority of voices depends on giving money; the demands for money are gradually rising."

In the dispatches of later years* we find statements of what the clergy, nobles, citizens, and peasants (all without exception) received; nay, the ambassador writes, "The nobles are to be had by the highest bidder, as we purchase cattle in Smithfield; but Sweden is not worth so much money!

"On the strictest examination, if the king of Sweden and his subjects are to be distinguished into different parties, I cannot find half a dozen likely to embrace his majesty's side,† amongst the nobility and gentry. The sentiments of the clergy in general seem very different, hitherto, from those of the upper house, and among the twenty-five members they have chose to be of their select committee, seventeen are reckoned to be of the king's party."

"A considerable majority of the boors seems hitherto to be the same way inclined, but none of this body have a right to assist at the secret committee.

* Dispatches of 31st October, 1746, and the 3rd October, 1747.

† Dispatch of 23rd December, 1740.

"Amongst the burghers in general, his majesty may reckon about thirty attached to his interest; the rest of this number, which passes eighty, are either wavering or in the opposition, and in the secret committee of the burghers there are scarce any of the first.

"None but members are allowed to be present* at a debate in any of the assemblies of the states, which makes it difficult to hear what passes among them; but two of the college of the nobles have offered for the value of 100*l.* to bring me an account, every other day, of what passes in their house during the whole diet. I have made each of them a present already of a suit of clothes, which they greatly wanted,† by way of earnest.

"The Queen of Sweden's coldness to the senators Count Gyllenborg, Baron Rosen, and M. Sparre (friends of Mademoiselle Taube), is notorious to everybody who attends her court, not only by her majesty's never speaking to, or taking notice of them, but by the refusing them to kiss her hand, when other senators, and people of inferior distinction, are, by custom, admitted to that honour; and by frequently ordering the dinner, after it is served, to be removed into her private apartment, if her majesty perceives either of them in the room when she is going to sit down to table in public; for otherwise they have a liberty to eat at the same table as often as they please, and without invitation.

* Dispatch of 2nd January, 1741. State-paper Office, Sweden, vol. lxxix.

† Dispatch of 13th January, 1741.

"Audiences by the king are insignificant, talking a great deal about hunting.*

"The boors have made reports against the preparations for war,† quite unexpected by the nobility, who never imagined the former would dare to meddle in such affairs. Some doubt, if they have a right, according to the constitution."

"There are great quarrels in the diet.‡ The chaplain who preached at court, and who is himself a member of the secret committee, took his text out of the gospel—'Every kingdom divided against itself, is brought to desolation—from which he took occasion to reproach the king for his indolence; the house of nobles, for being composed of hot-headed young men; and the members of his own committee, for praying for peace, and declaring war. Many of those who are more sober and wealthier begin to think of the consequences of a war, but the younger men, the officers that have no property to lose, and hope for advancement, call in the diet for a war."

Thus this party, which was besides encouraged by France, at length triumphed. On the 21st of July, the diet decided on war. The English ambassador afterwards wrote:—"The declaration of war against Russia is superficial, the quarrel groundless, and a too great influence of Russia might have been avoided in some other manner."

At all events, these quarrels occupied those two powers in such a manner, that they could not for the present meddle with the affairs of central Europe.

* Dispatch of 13th February.
† Dispatch of 20th February.
‡ Dispatch of 26th February.

We may now return to France, and see how it maintains, or rather changes its position, and gives a different meaning to its engagements. On the 31st December, the English ambassador writes from Paris:*—"The Austrian ambassadors are very much discouraged, and fear that France will not abide by its guarantee of the Austrian successions. They are astonished at the conduct of Naples, Spain, and Prussia. On the other hand, the French minister, Amelot, complains that Austria imposed on France, by making it to believe that the Pragmatic Sanction prejudiced nobody; whereas at present, almost everybody pretends to some part of the emperor's succession."

This objection was certainly insufficient, for it was the business of France to examine before it undertook the guarantee, or, if this had been neglected, to do it now in an impartial manner.

"Mr. Wasner," continues the ambassador on the 14th January, 1741,† "reminded Cardinal Fleury, with much eloquence, of the duties of France, and that it depended upon it to preserve tranquillity and order. Fleury and King Louis XV. assured him, (Wasner) they would perform all the engagements into which they had entered. At the same time M. de Bray, the Saxon plenipotentiary, asked Mr. Amelot, the French minister of foreign affairs, what he thought of the war in Silesia. M. Amelot told him, that at first this court imagined it was a thing concerted with the court of Vienna, and therefore did not give themselves much trouble about it; but that, at present, they had changed their opinion,

* State-paper Office, France, vol. lxxxviii.
† Ibid. vol. lxxxix.

and France was ready to agree with England and Holland, respecting the measures to be adopted.

"Mr. Wasner seems persuaded that France had no hand in encouraging the king of Prussia, and on the contrary believes they would not be sorry to know how to get him back again; for he is strengthening himself in such a manner, that it is given out, he will have at least 200,000 men at the end of this year. It seems the Cardinal encourages both sides; which of the two are to be the dupes at last of this finessing, must, I think, be left to time to discover.

"In Spain three great taxes are imposed:* First, 10 per cent. upon all landed estates, houses and rents whatsoever. Secondly, the increase of the Alcavala by 4 per cent. Thirdly, an augmentation of the salt tax from 40 to 53 reals per fanega. Lastly, it is proposed to reduce salaries and pensions one-third—all which excites great discontent. France has refused, for the present, permission for Spanish troops to pass through its territory.†

"It is well known" (says a dispatch of the 8th of February), "that the excursion of the king of Prussia into Silesia is very welcome to the court of Madrid, and Campo Florido wrote thither,‡ that this step of the king of Prussia had given a particular pleasure to Cardinal Fleury, who (being animated and encouraged by these disturbances,) might be prevailed upon to favour the designs of Spain. Now, however, nothing could be done, it would be necessary to wait for the decision at Franckfort, to turn

* State-paper Office, dispatch of 14th January, 1741.

† Dispatch of 28th January.

‡ This is the opinion of Campo Florido respecting the plans of the French. We however find the contrary in a Spanish dispatch.

the election in favour of Saxony or Bavaria, or at least to embroil matters so as to gain time. That such a delay would not only do no harm to the two crowns, but on the contrary be to their advantage inasmuch as the English would be all this while exhausting their treasures and ruining their commerce, and France would be getting herself out of the difficulties she labours under at present, from the scarcity of provisions."

On this the Spanish minister observed: France intended to deceive Spain, to make terms with Austria, perhaps for advantages in the Netherlands, and leave Spain in the lurch as she had done in the last war.

According to a dispatch of the 14th of April*, Cardinal Fleury said about this time to the Russian ambassador, Prince Cantemir, that France was under no sort of obligation to support the Pragmatic Sanction, the empire never having guaranteed the last treaty between France and the emperor. However, the Cardinal declared about the same time that the king of France would not begin a war unless he was obliged to do it.

In an English dispatch from Paris of the 10th of May, it is stated, that the Spanish ambassador, in the name of his king, made vehement reproaches to Cardinal Fleury, which the latter politely repelled, and then produced the following draught of a treaty†.

1. The elector of Bavaria to be emperor.

2. For the war in Italy, France furnishes 80,000 men, Spain 50,000, and Naples 15,000.

* State-paper Office, France, vol. xc.

† Dispatch from Vienna of 5th of May. State-paper Office Austria, vol. cxxxvi.

3. Spain shall have Port Mahon and Gibraltar; a Spanish prince to have Tuscany, Parma, Piacenza, and a part of Lombardy.

4. The English to be for ever excluded from the Assiento contract.

5. Cuba to be divided between France and Spain.

6. Spain is not to oppose the projects which France has upon the Netherlands;

7. Nor the measures of two northern powers, which France has gained over on the condition that Spain agrees to this treaty.

"These proposals were far from meeting with the expected approbation in Madrid; on the contrary, the queen of Spain* was so much exasperated about France, that she has told an intimate of hers, that she would willingly give the queen of Hungary considerable sums only to have Parma and Piacenza, and that she would guarantee the Pragmatic Sanction over and above, on purpose to be revenged on France."

It was not till the 22d of July (by which time so many changes had taken place in the state of public affairs), that Spain gave the following answer to the above proposals:—

It is indifferent to Spain who is emperor, provided only that the claims brought forward are acknowledged:

For the war in Italy, it would furnish 30,000 men; respecting the partition of the conquests, it could not yet say anything; could not tie its hands with respect to the Assiento contract, nor approve of

* State-paper Office, France, vol. xc.

French conquests in the Netherlands; it could not recognise the right of Bavaria to Bohemia, nor give up any part of Cuba, nor enter into the plans of the northern powers, till it knew what powers and plans were meant.

Cardinal Fleury was very much dissatisfied with this answer; it came, however, too late to contribute anything to the preservation of peace.

CHAPTER XIII.

Negotiations of Lord Hyndford with Frederick II.—Contemporary Negotiations of Robinson at Vienna respecting a Reconciliation with Prussia—Aversion of the Queen and of the Grand Duke—Character of Maria Theresa—Terror in Vienna at the Treaty of Prussia with France—Resolution at Paris—Austrian Proposals of Cessions in the Netherlands to Prussia—Declined by Frederick—Robinson and Hyndford in the Camp of Frederick—Unsuccessful Negotiations.

THOUGH Cardinal Fleury towards the end of May, 1741, still spoke of his love of peace*, so many preparations for war were carried on at the same time, that the English could not but more earnestly wish and promote a reconciliation between Prussia and Austria. Frederick, too, entered into fresh negotiations, but more to gain time, than because he believed the possibility of a favourable result. The following extracts explain the course of events:—

On the 13th of May, 1741, Lord Hyndford gives, from Breslau, the following account of an audience of the king†:—"The latter was very animated and warm

* Dispatch of the 24th May, from Paris. State-paper Office, France, vol. xc.

† State-paper Office, Prussia, vol. liii.

respecting England's conduct and the declarations in parliament. To Lord Hyndford's question, what he demanded, the minister Podewils, who was present, answered, 'Lower Silesia and Breslau;' and the king added, 'The queen of Hungary may think herself happy to escape so well, for you see it is in my power to make myself master of all Silesia, and next of Moravia; there is nothing to stop me but the small town of Olmütz, which is of no great consequence, and then all communication with Bohemia is cut off. But notwithstanding my victories, I will still be reasonable.' To the question, whether he would maintain the remaining part of the Pragmatic Sanction, and give his vote for the election of the emperor, he answered, 'Yes.'" Even on the 11th of June, Frederick* declared that he would be contented with four duchies of Silesia that were conveniently situated for him.

It was, doubtless, with reference to these declarations, that Lord Harrington wrote on the 21st of June to Mr. Robinson at Vienna†, that he should do everything possible to induce Maria Theresa to accede to the demands of Prussia, which were so greatly moderated, and then hasten to the king to complete arrangements. Not a moment was to be lost, otherwise Prussia would join with France, and a long, doubly dangerous war would ensue. After the most urgent recommendations of this affair, Harrington continues:—"In these scenes of danger, which threaten, not one or two of the queen's provinces, but her whole security, is it possible that your court should deliberate upon buying one of the

* State-paper Office, Prussia, vol. liii.

† State-paper Office, Austria, vol. cxxxvii.

most powerful enemies by the mortgage of one district of a little more or less extent in Silesia. If, however, they continue under their infatuation, you must let them feel that his majesty considers it a very ill return to the many effective and expensive proofs he has given of his disposition to assist and support Austria. But by its own obstinacy and folly, it will plunge itself and England into a dangerous war."

Accordingly, on the 24th of June, fresh negotiations were commenced at Vienna, of which Robinson on the 27th sends the following account:— "Opinions (he says) are divided; Bartenstein, for example, maintains that it would be better to give up all the Italian possessions to the king of Sardinia*, than a foot of land to the king of Prussia. The grand duke will not even advise the cession of Glogau, but that he could not and would not advise the queen to give one inch more, nor would he even advise that, upon any other footing than that of a redeemable mortgage; words that he repeated over and over again. That were he even to pretend to advise the giving any more, or in any other manner, he would in confidence tell me, he should not have credit enough with the queen to obtain it. But so far from pretending to go himself any further, he should look upon any man whatever in the queen's court who should do so, as the greatest traitor. It was not for want of deference to the king's advice, or of a true sense of the queen's danger, and of that of all Europe: it was only the nature of the thing, and the situation of the counties demanded by Prussia, that made it impracticable. Once pos-

* Without doubt, excited feelings had their influence here.

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sessed of the four duchies, he was not only master of the whole of Silesia, but of Moravia and Bohemia*, when he should please to put his further ambitious views in execution. It is your negotiations upon impracticabilities which ruin us.

"The grand duke agreed with me as to the destruction which his rashness might possibly bring upon himself, the queen, and all England; but he himself could not stand the storm, and perhaps I was not enough acquainted with his situation. He suffered more than I knew in the minds of the queen's subjects, for his so great and long confidence in hoping better of the king than he deserved.

"When I told him that England would by its situation be the last to suffer, in the destruction which I saw his court was bringing upon his own head and England, 'Yes,' he said, 'that cursed ditch which separates you from the continent. Would to God that you were upon the latter, then you would feel like us. If the Earl of Harrington were king, in the midst of the German territories, and they demanded the best and most necessary part of them, would he give it up?' I said, yes; if his own fate and that of England depended upon it, as absolutely as that of the queen and all Europe depends upon the sacrifice of little more or less in Silesia. The grand duke concluded that he would rather renounce all crowns, and even the imperial crown, than acquire them at the cost of his consort.

"As for the latter, she has all the most amiable qualities imaginable, and indeed talents more than proper to her little experience: but even these ta-

* This opinion was not at all confirmed in the sequel.

lents are sometimes carried away with too much vivacity. She has, and probably always will have, spirit enough to be governed; but she has not, as yet at least, knowledge to govern; she trusts to the graces of her behaviour to make impression, and that both renders her easier, and readier to breathe out to certain persons her complaints, when she gains upon herself to stifle her passion. It was in this manner that some weeks ago she let drop to the nuncio, that her allies were forcing her into a worse treaty than that of Belgrade, meaning the proposal of ceding Lower Silesia with Breslau."

On the 27th June, Robinson repeated his representations to the grand duke and his ministers, but was equally unsuccessful. "Glogau," he says, "might perhaps have done; nothing more could be done, be the event, be the extremity what it would; the queen being absolutely averse to the giving anything at all in Silesia, which threw the council into the greatest embarrassment and division." Probably the grand duke is secretly of another mind. Count Stahremberg told me, he waited for God's higher interference what was to be done; upon which I recommended him to the help of God!" A third consultation with the ministers was equally unsuccessful, and in truth it was now too late.

Tired of the long delay, and driven to a resolution by the existing state of affairs, Frederick had secretly concluded a treaty with France on the 5th June*, the existence of which was known in London†

* Valory, Mémoires, vol. i., 108.

† Letter from Lord Harrington of 24th June. State-paper Office, Austria, vol. cxxxvi.

on the 24th July, and probably immediately afterwards in Vienna.

Respecting a consultation with the Prussian ministers, Robinson writes, "When they heard of the treaty between Prussia, France, and Bavaria, they fell back into their chairs like dead men. It was too late, and in truth it was neither more nor less than they had expected, and yet they had not acted. Maria Theresa and the grand duke complained loudly of the equivocal behaviour of the king of Prussia. I still entertain a good hope of withdrawing him from France."—After an audience with Maria Theresa, the ambassador writes further, "The queen does yet seem capable of an universal reflection. Beating about Silesia, attached, as it were to that single object which pinches the most, she betrayed, I hope, the narrow way of thinking rather of those whom she mostly hearkens to, than those talents which I flatter myself, will with time, shoot out to more advantage."

On the 1st of July the English ambassador writes from Paris *:—"Mr. Wasner relates from good authority, that peace or war had been debated in council a few days ago, and that it had been carried for the latter. But when, or where, is not said. When Wasner said to Cardinal Fleury he heard that Bavaria had collected an army, and that 40,000 Frenchmen were going to join it, his Eminence laughed, without ever saying anything to the contrary."

On the 2nd of July the ambassador states, that it had been resolved upon to assist Bavaria, and to

* State-paper Office, France, vol. cx.

send an army into Bohemia; Fleury had been compelled to give way to the advocates for war.

Meantime Lord Hyndford had laid before the king of Prussia the first reply of the court of Vienna. "He called it (writes Hyndford on the 24th of July.*) a silly, weak and impertinent answer, worthy of the court of Vienna. 'I must give them another battle, for they will never be reasonable till I have driven them quite out of the country. When his compensation in Silesia or the Netherlands was spoken of, with the intimation that he should only ask†, he said with a smile, 'If I am to make a demand, I will ask enough, for I will have all Brabant, Flanders, High Guelders, in short all that Austria possesses in that part of the world, and I will keep the Lower Silesia until I am in possession of those countries.'"

Hyndford erred greatly when he imagined that the king was pleased with the very inconsiderable offers made him in the Netherlands. He was not at all desirous to prepare great dangers for himself at a distance, instead of getting possessions nearer home.

Upon his urgent demand that Austria should define exactly what it would cede, it offered for an alliance, for a vote in the imperial election, and the evacuation of Silesia—nothing, but Austrian Guelderland, and in case of the utmost need, Limburg and two millions (guilders?)

Conformably to a command of Harrington, Robinson himself at length hastened from Vienna to

* State-paper Office, Austria, vol. cxxxvii.

† On the other hand Austria likewise thought of securing the neutrality of France by a cession of territory in the Netherlands. State-paper Office, Prussia, vol. xxxiii. Dispatch of 25th July.

Silesia. On the 3rd of August he writes from Breslau*, "We have information that the king is not absolutely engaged with France till the 12th of August, so that it is the utmost time to come to some conclusion with him. Podewils however said, that without satisfying his master's pretensions in Silesia, nothing was to be—nothing could be done.

On the 7th of August, Robinson and Hyndford had an audience of the king in his camp at Strehlen. "When I, writes Robinson†, mentioned the two million guilders, (for I kept still in the general) for which his majesty would be pleased to retire out of Silesia: 'Do you take me for a beggar,' cried he? 'I retire out of Silesia? and for money? who have consumed so much treasure and blood in the conquest of it. No sir, no! it is not to be thought of! If you have no better proposals to make, it is not worth while talking.' These words were accompanied with threatening gestures and marks of great anger.

"'Let us see however what there is more?' I now offered Austrian Guelderland. 'What do you mean by that?' The king turning to Podewils said, 'Qui est ce qui nous reste de toute la Gueldre?'—'Hardly anything.' The king added; 'All this is rubbish! What, such a nest, for all my just claims in Silesia?' His indignation increased here, in proportion to my keeping a profound silence, and to my not breaking it but to beseech his majesty to lay out some attention upon what I had said.

"My lord, his contempt of what I had so said, was so great, and expressed in such violent terms,

* State-paper Office, Austria, vol. cxxxvii.

† Compare the account given by the king in the "History of his own Times."

that if ever it was time to make the last effort, by offering the whole duchy of Limburg, a moment longer was not to be lost, to hinder the king from dismissing us. I extolled the duchy to the utmost, described it in the most favourable terms, and added, that the elector Palatine had been willing to give the whole duchy of Berg for it. Here Mr. von Podewils interrupted me, and said, precisely the contrary was true, the elector had not been ready to give Berg for it.

"The king said, 'he could not conceive how Austria could dare to think of violating so solemn an engagement, which renders every inch of ground of the Netherlands inalienable.' This, I replied, is only the case as concerns the French. The king said, 'That is your present interpretation, but the French pretend it was more a stipulation in their favour than against them; that as to himself he had no desire to aggrandize himself in those parts, which were useless to him, much less to lay out money in new fortifications; (which Robinson had recommended:) Am I not fortifying Glogau and Brieg? Those I have are sufficient, for one who intends to live well with his neighbours. Neither French nor Dutch have offended me, nor will I offend them; as I certainly should by such unlawful acquisitions. Besides, who would guarantee them?' I observed that the plan was, to give guarantees.—'Guarantees?' replied the king, 'and who minds or observes guarantees in this age? Has not France guaranteed the Pragmatic Sanction—and England? Why do you not all fly to the queen's succour?' I said, I could not answer for all, but the necessity of things would certainly at last bring forth the true friends of

Austria and of the liberties of Europe.—'And pray Sir,' said the king, 'who are these?' I replied, it could not be otherwise with Russia, which power, with respect to Turkey, could not subsist without the conservation of Austria.—'Good! good! Sir—the Russians! It is not proper for me to explain myself, but I have means for them.' I told him, Russia was not the only power that had engagements, and must keep them with Austria; so that however such a power might be averse to a breach .... the king cut me short, applying his finger to his nose, and by crying out—'No threats, Sir! if you please! No threats!' Lord Hyndford said, he was sure I was going to advance nothing but conformably to my orders, and Podewils put in something proper, as he thought, to restrain his master.—I said, 'Sire, I do not say what others will do, but I say, what will come of itself. And when I speak only of what cannot fail to happen, there is no threat. My zeal for the public brought me hither.' 'The public, Sir,' interrupted the king, 'will be much obliged to you. But hear me: with respect to Russia, you know how matters stand; from the king of Poland I have nothing to fear; for the king of England—he is my relation—he is my all; if he does not attack me, I shall not attack him. If he does, the prince of Anhalt will take care of him.'

"I now mentioned the news, that the king would join the French after the 12th of August. Austria, I observed, preferred his friendship, but if he disdained it, would throw itself entirely into the hands of France. The king was quite silent upon this head. I do not love conjectures, but if I was to make one, it would be founded upon the consciousness of

his guilt. He threw out from time to time the advantageousness of his present situation:—at the head of a powerful, and in the manner he speaks of it, invincible army; with the country conquered behind him, which is the only object of his views; which he will, which he must have; which he will not be bought out of; which alone is to his convenience, and where he will rather perish with all his troops. 'With what face shall I meet my ancestors, if I abandon my right which they have transmitted down to me? With what reputation can I live, if I quit lightly an enterprize, the first action of my reign, begun with reflection, carried on with firmness, and to be maintained to the last extremity? Have I occasion for peace? Let those who want it give me what I want, or let them fight me again, and be beaten again. Have they not given whole kingdoms to Spain? And cannot they spare me a few trifling principalities? If the queen does not now grant all I require, I shall in four weeks demand four principalities more. I now demand the whole of Lower Silesia and Breslau; and with this answer you may return to Vienna.' Twice I asked the king if he persisted in it, and he answered, 'Yes! that is my answer, and I will never give any other.'

"We both now proposed to explain the Vienna proposals more in detail to Mr. Von Podewils, but the king said, 'Gentlemen, gentlemen, it is of no use even to think of it;' and, taking his hat, he retired precipitately behind the curtain of the interior corner of the tent. I now said to Mr. Von Podewils, 'France will abandon Prussia out of self-interest;' and he answered, 'No, no! France will not deceive us, as we have not deceived it!'"

CHAPTER XIV.

Austria offers Lower Silesia—March of the French—Frederick to Hyndford—Negotiations for an Armistice—Meeting at Schnellendorf, between the King of Prussia, the Austrian Field-Marshal Neipperg, and Lord Hyndford—Armistice concluded—Secrecy required—Publication—Continuation of the War—Hyndford's Complaints of Frederick—New Deliberations and Negotiations.

THE Austrian ministers and the English plenipotentiaries might easily have foreseen that, in the situation of Frederick and all the other powers, the negotiations commenced in the manner above mentioned must necessarily fail. They, however, paid less regard to the actual state of things and to what was practicable, than to what they wished; and even Maria Theresa, when Robinson gave her an account of the result, said, nothing more could be done*, —that she could and would do no more than immediately make up with the Elector of Bavaria. But, in the middle of August, when a division of French troops had already crossed the Rhine, Robinson prevailed on the court of Vienna again to enter into negotiations with the King of Prussia, and to offer him Lower Silesia, according to a line which extended from Greifenberg, by way of Dohlau, directly across the country. No mention whatever was made of Breslau, and Maria Theresa declared that she would not be bound by this offer more than a fortnight.

On the 29th August, Robinson arrived for the second time at Breslau†; but what would have been

* State-paper Office, Austria, vol. cxxxviii. Dispatch of 24th August. † Dispatch of 2nd September.

gratefully accepted four months before, was now rejected (even on account of the annexed dangerous and burdensome conditions), and Robinson returned without accomplishing his object. At length, on the 8th September, Austria offered the whole of Lower Silesia, as Frederick understood it, together with Breslau. But the king refused to accede to this proposal also, because the state of things had materially changed*. On the 16th September, 1741, he answered to Lord Hyndford:—"I have received the new scheme of alliance which the indefatigable Robinson sent you. I find it as chimerical as the first, and you have only to answer to the court of Vienna, that the Elector of Bavaria will be emperor, and that my engagements with his most Christian majesty and the Elector of Bavaria were so solemn, so indissoluble and inviolable, that I would not quit those faithful allies to enter into connexion with a court which never can nor will be otherwise than irreconcilable towards me. That it was no longer time to succour it, and that it must resolve to submit to all the rigour of its fate. Are these people fools, my lord, to imagine that I shall be guilty of the treachery of turning my arms against my friends in their favour, and do you not see yourself how gross is the bait which they hold out to me? I beg you no more to fatigue me with such proposals, and to believe that I am a sufficiently honest man not to violate my engagements."

Notwithstanding these assurances, the king was by no means averse from making such an arrangement with the court of Vienna, that his possession might

* State-paper Office, Prussia, vol. liv.

be secured to him, and the burden of the war alleviated, without leading to a breach of his other treaties. A dispatch of Lord Hyndford of the 4th October, from Neisse, gives an account of a new audience which Frederick had granted him*. The latter complained that the King of England and the Elector of Hanover spoke and acted in a different manner, but he promised to do them no harm. The English plan against Osnaburg, Munster, and Hildesheim, had, he said, offended the Elector of Cologne, and excited the French to take a part and to occupy Hanover. He would, however, do all he could to dissuade them from it. Saxony had joined the great alliance, and would have for its share Moravia and Upper Silesia.

The king continued:—"I will do what I can; but at the same time, entre nous, it is but reasonable that the King of England should let me have my conveniences." And being asked what he meant? he continued:—"He must give me those fiefs in Mecklenburgh; and, entre nous, he must procure me the guarantee of Russia for the country of Silesia."

The king, however, as we have observed, was by no means disposed entirely to ruin Maria Theresa; on which account the Prussian minister, Count Golz, wrote to Lord Hyndford in the course of September: "All that we can do for the advantage of the queen, which is by no means indifferent to us, is to let her army withdraw from hence, without concluding any treaty, to assure ourselves of Silesia, and not to act elsewhere against any person whatever."

In a second letter of Count Golz to Lord Hynd-

* State-paper Office, Prussia, vol. liv.

ford, of the 28th September, he says:—"You will conceive that the king cannot conclude a separate treaty with Austria. The French would make him pay for it in Westphalia, and this would but further delay a general peace. I have orders to tell you that, if you can protract the negotiations till the winter, means will be found to put everything in order. Meantime, you must let us take the town of Neisse, without delay, and go with your army where you please. The king will be content with Lower Silesia and Neisse. Then the war will be ended in reality, if not in appearance, and we take up our winter quarters in Upper Silesia, but without levying contributions."

In consequence of these preliminary negotiations, a very secret interview took place on the 8th October*, at Schnellendorf, between the king and the Austrian field-marshal Neipperg, at which General Lentulus, Colonel Golz, and Lord Hyndford were present. The following particulars are taken from his Lordship's dispatch of the 14th October†:—

"After some conference, the king and the marshal agreed. The king was extremely polite and civil, and made great protestations of his good wishes and intentions for the queen and the grand duke, now that they continued no longer obstinate; for he added that, if they had, he would have pursued them to the utmost; but that now he was really concerned for the queen's misfortune, and that, if this affair was

* About this time, a separate negotiation between Austria and France was attempted, which was broken off by Maria Theresa. Hyndford's Dispatch of 2d February, 1742.

† State-paper Office, Prussia, vol. liv.

kept secret, he would do more for their service than he was then at liberty to say. He intimated that he would endeavour to preserve Moravia and Upper Silesia for her, in opposition to Saxony, and that he would hinder the Bavarians from taking winter quarters in Bohemia. He likewise offered, through Golz, 50,000 ducats, for the supplies necessary in his winter quarters.

"The king staid above two hours, and all the while talked with the greatest concern for the queen and the Duke of Lorraine, and gave Marshal Neipperg his advice with regard to the operations against his allies, and recommended to him, particularly, to make Prince Lobkowitz join him with all his force, to strike a stroke before the allies should join; and if he were successful, he insinuated little less than that he would take part with the queen; but if she was still unlucky, he must look to himself.

"But, above all, he has recommended to everybody the greatest secrecy, and, in order to blind M. Valory, he desired me to write him a letter to his camp, complaining of the bad success of my endeavours to bring about an accommodation, which should arrive with a trumpet while he was at dinner; that he would take care to have Valory with him, and would show him my letter directly."

The conditions of the agreement of the 9th October are:—Neisse surrenders in fourteen days, and the garrison is permitted to depart. After this the king remains inactive, taking no part, and contents himself with Lower Silesia and Neisse. A part of the Prussian army goes into winter quarters in Upper Silesia. There shall be no levy of contributions or of recruits, but forage shall be supplied.

From time to time, for the sake of appearance, there shall be some petty warfare. A complete treaty shall be concluded, if possible, by the end of the year.

The reasons which induced Frederick to agree to this armistice are detailed by him in his History of his own Times*. He desired, above all things, not to found the preponderance of France on the ruin of Austria, and thereby become himself a dependent servant, instead of an independent ally. He wished to profit by the interval, to strengthen his army, and knew that secret negotiations of Austria with France, as well as the blabbing of the secret which he had strictly recommended to be kept, would, in case of need, always afford him an opportunity and pretext to take other measures.

In truth, Frederick did not insist on this secrecy merely to lay a trap for the Austrians, which, besides, they might have avoided; but it was indeed absolutely necessary on account of the French and Bavarians. The secret was, however, already made known† on the 21st October. Count Khevenhiller (how came he to know it?) wrote it to Count Wratislaw, who made it known at Dresden that peace was concluded between Prussia and Austria. Frederick was extremely angry at this, and insisted on a formal denial. At the same time, Golz wrote to Lord Hyndford:—"If Austria does not speedily conclude a complete peace, it will do itself the greatest injury, and the king, to whom his allies daily make greater offers, will not be kept back any longer." Accord-

* Œuvres posthumes, vol. i. p. 196.
† Hyndford's Dispatch. State-paper Office, Prussia, vol. liv.

ingly, the king said soon after*, that if the queen did not immediately conclude, he would demand four duchies more, and not desist till he was entirely defeated.

At length information arrived that Maria Theresa had accepted the terms of the 9th October†. But as no steps were taken, at the same time, to conclude a complete peace, and the secret had been everywhere made known, while the Saxons and Bavarians entered Bohemia and took Prague on the 26th November, Frederick considered himself as no longer bound to exert himself to bring about a peace. On the 16th December, he declared that, as the court of Vienna had communicated the secret to all the European courts, he was no longer bound by the convention of the 9th October. The court of Vienna denied all immediate blame, and laid the fault on general reports and conversations; while Lord Hyndford, who saw his hopes disappointed, made the bitterest complaints of Frederick.

"The king," he says, "aims only at his own interest, without any regular plan and system*." The latter part of this sentence is, however, in contradiction with the former; for the system invariably and consistently followed by the king was, not to make the greatness and welfare of Prussia subordinate to the interests of Austria, France, or England. All the others did the same in their way, only in part with other forms and terms, and in the ancient diplomatic fashion. Lord Hyndford, a statesman of the old school, was much scandalized at this; he could not come to an understanding with a King of Prussia‡

* Dispatch of 9th November, 1741, vol. liii.
† Dispatch of 12th November.
‡ Ibid.

he could not comprehend him, because he would no longer suffer himself, like a former Margrave of Brandenburg, to be kept in leading-strings by France or England. "No ties," writes Lord Hyndford*, "are strong enough to bind the king contrary to his own interests." He, however, attempted to effect this by new verbal representations. Respecting this audience he writes, on 26th December, in substance as follows:—

"The king said, I am sorry they have put it out of my power to be of service to them. If they had kept the secret, as they ought to have done for their own interest, I could have preserved for them Moravia and the two Austrias, but it was certainly not my interest to let them keep Bohemia or Upper Silesia, for sooner or later they would have been very troublesome neighbours to me. But as to Moravia, they could not have had so easy access from thence. They have had a double view in divulging the secret: first, to make me suspected by my allies; and next, by keeping some of the electors in suspense, they had conceived hopes of the imperial dignity, which neither France nor I could ever consent to. You see, my lord, I speak openly to you. They have been guilty of another folly in suffering Prague to be taken under their nose, without risking a battle. If they had been successful, I do not know what I should have done. But now we have 130,000 men against 70,000 of theirs, and it is to be imagined we should beat them, and they have nothing to do but submit, and to make as good a peace as they can, for they have no hopes left since this revo-

* Dispatch of 15th December, 1741.

lution in Muscovy, which has been brought about by the intrigues of the French."

When Lord Hyndford remarked, that France would not be inclined to establish in him, an equally great power, of a different religion, Frederick answered, "As for the matter of religion, that is the least concern of princes!" "How," continued Hyndford, "if France and Russia should agree, to what danger would the two powers lying between be exposed."—"When that happens," answered Frederick, "we must do as well as we can."—"Suppose," continued the ambassador, "Austria should publish the convention of the 9th October, and represent it in the worst light?" "If they do so, they would only expose their own folly and weakness, in spoiling their own game, and perhaps they would not be believed."

"Upon the whole," said Lord Hyndford, "there is nothing to be done with this prince, while his affairs go on so successfully."

CHAPTER XV.

Fresh Complaints of Hyndford against Frederick—English Mediation—Victory of Czaslau—Peace of Breslau and Berlin—Complaints of Maria Theresa—Terror in Paris—Frederick's Justification of his Conduct.

In the following dispatches of Hyndford, he persists in his partial view, and gives vent to his feelings in complaints of Frederick*. "It is inconceivable," he

* State-paper Office, Prussia, vol. lvi.

writes on the 2d January, 1742, from Berlin, "how much he is hated in this place by people of all degrees, for his avarice and penury. He pays nobody; the tradespeople employed by the court are starving, and he has struck off one half of the pensions left by the late king to his children and the other princes of his family, and the other half is extremely ill paid."

In his dispatch of the 9th January, he says, "Upon all occasions he declares his disregard of treaties and guarantees, and the opinion that no faith or ties should bind a prince any longer when he is in a condition to break them to his advantage*;" and on the 30th January, "From the occurrences, the changeable disposition, and the pusillanimity of the king at the least misfortune, some alteration of conduct may be hoped. Prayers, entreaties, and just expostulations will never have any effect upon him†."

The hopes of the king certainly increased with good reason‡, and in a dispatch of Hyndford of the 12th of February, the cession of all Silesia and the county of Glatz was spoken of. In the course of May, the negotiations with the court of Vienna were very active, and the king caused 100,000 dollars to be offered to Hyndford if peace should be concluded as he desired. This offer was, however, refused.

On the 17th May, Hyndford writes:—"The king will not enter into the Austrian plan, immediately

* Respecting his principles touching this point, the king has satisfactorily explained himself in the introduction to the History of his Times. I refer the reader to it.

† Dispatch of 2d February.

‡ Œuvres Posth., vol. viii. p. 170.

to make war upon his allies." Instead of finding this very natural and just, like a true statesman, Hyndford again gives vent to his ill humour, and exclaims, "What dependence is to be had upon a prince who has neither truth, honour, nor religion?—who looks upon treaties as upon matrimony, to bind fools, and who turns into ridicule the most sacred things?—who has no resolution, no settled plan, and will not ask advice, but orders everything from his own head, and prefers the smallest present advantage to the most solid, lasting, future benefits?"

And the same Hyndford, who fancied that he had hereby fully appreciated, or rather degraded, a man like Frederick, writes in another dispatch*:—"As we have to do with a court which is now known to all the world to have no principles but those of chicane and *fourberies*, they must be paid in their own coin. Thus far I played the comedian, in order to extort from the king a sort of confession of his having been in the wrong."

On the 20th May, Lord Carteret communicated to Mr. Robinson at Vienna a passage from a secret instruction of Frederick for his ambassador in London†. It says: "If Queen Maria Theresa can be induced to grant me advantageous terms, such as I have communicated to Lord Hyndford, without requiring me to make war on my present allies, I am ready to agree. A defensive alliance between me and the maritime powers will be the first fruit of it."

On the 23d May (five days after Hyndford had so severely blamed the principles and the exorbitant

* Dispatches of the 25th July and 20th August, 1743.
† State-paper Office, Austria, vol. cxlii.

demands of Frederick), he writes*:—"The queen of Hungary is in the wrong not to accede to the king's demands; I think she should be the less averse to make those temporary cessions, as they are extorted by force, after a repeated breach of faith on his side; for no power in heaven or earth could blame the house of Austria for using the *lex talionis*, in endeavouring to reconquer those countries when it can find an opportunity."

Frederick's victory at Czaslau, on the 17th May, 1742, contributed not a little to induce Maria Theresa to yield. The preliminaries of peace were concluded at Breslau on the 11th June, and the definitive peace at Berlin on the 28th July, by which Silesia and Glatz were ceded. "The grief of Maria Theresa," writes Robinson on the 19th June†, "is very great; all evils appear to her trifling in comparison with the cession of Silesia. The fairest jewel of her crown, she says, is broken off. Upon this occasion she forgets the queen, and when she sees a Silesian she sinks into the woman, by bursting almost into tears."

This grief was certainly more natural, more noble and just, than the lamentations of the French government that Frederick would not blindly fall into their plans for changing the face of Europe. The English ambassador writes from Paris, on the 4th July, 1742‡:—"The news of the peace concluded between Prussia and Austria made a very strong impression. M. Belleisle, they said, fainted away, and the cardinal burst into tears. The king, who has as much command of his countenance as most people,

* State-paper Office, Prussia, vol. lvi.
† Ibid., Austria, vol. cxliv.
‡ Ibid., France, vol. xcii.

could not help showing some concern; and the whole court was thunderstruck. But they have endeavoured to hide as much from the world as possible. They say it was no more than what they apprehended from the beginning."

"The cardinal votes warmly, but almost alone, for peace*. They are in want of money, but take bad means to obtain it."

The Austrian ministers were not satisfied with the English mediation†, and thought that it tended to raise Prussia and Sardinia at the expense of Maria Theresa. Count Stelfeld hinted that the queen's absolute resolution was taken, at all hazards, to direct things to the single end of destroying the French.‡

The king has fully refuted, in the History of his Times§, the reproaches which were made him for the conclusion of the treaty at Berlin. The following passage, from a confidential letter to Jordan, may have a place here‖:—

"I trouble myself but little about the foolish jargon of the public, and appeal to all the doctors of law, and of political morality, whether, after having done, humanly speaking, all that depends upon me to fulfil my engagements, I am obliged not to depart from them, when I see, on the one hand, an ally who does not act; on the other, an ally who acts badly; and when, in addition, I apprehend being abandoned, on the first ill success, by means of a patched-up

* Dispatch of 1st August.

† State-paper Office, Austria, vol. cxliv. Dispatch of 30th July.

‡ Ibid. Dispatch of 26th September.

§ Œuvres Posth., i. chap. 6 and 9.

‖ Ibid., viii. 193. On the Complaints against the French, p. 187.

peace, by the strongest and most powerful of my allies? I ask, if in a case when I foresee the ruin of my army, the exhausting of my treasury, the loss of my conquests, the depopulation of my state—in a word, all the misfortunes to which the chance of war and the duplicity of politicians expose a prince—I ask if, in such a case, a sovereign has not good grounds to secure himself from a certain shipwreck, or evident danger, by a prudent retreat?

In the case of a private person, only his individual advantage is in question; he ought constantly to sacrifice it to the good of society. Thus, the rigid observance of morality is his duty, the rule being, it is better that one man should suffer, than that a whole people should perish. In a sovereign, the advantage of a great nation is his object; it is his duty to promote it; to attain it, he ought to sacrifice himself, and much more his engagements, when they begin to be contrary to the welfare of his people*.

* Similar grounds parted Prussia from France in 1813.

CHAPTER XVI.

Russia—French and Swedish Intrigues—Ostermann's Character—Apprehensions of Elizabeth's Plans—False Confidence—Lestocq—Chetardie—Intrigues—Mademoiselle Julia Mengden—Character of the Regent and his Consort—Disagreement between them—Elizabeth's Disposition and Love of Pleasure—Disposition of the Old Russians—Birth-day of Iwan III.—The Chief of the Don Cossacks—The Birth-day of Elizabeth—Presents to her—The Persian Ambassador—Fall of the Regent and of Iwan III.—Elizabeth proclaimed Empress—Arrests—Punishments—Elevation of Lestocq—Influence and Conduct of Chetardie—Rewards and Arrogance of the Body Guard—Proceedings against Ostermann, Münnich, &c.—Cruelty and Injustice of the Proceedings—Participation and Revengeful Spirit of the Empress—Sentence of the Accused—Conduct of Ostermann and Münnich—The Arrival of the Duke of Holstein—He is baptized, and nominated Successor to the Throne—Court Intrigues—Morals and Conduct of Elizabeth—Neglect of the Government—Apprehensions for the future.

HAVING brought down my communications respecting the history of central Europe to a convenient resting-place, namely, the peace of Berlin, it is necessary to return to the north, and give further extracts from the dispatches of the English ambassador Finch. He writes from St. Petersburg, on the 21st June, 1741*:—"I made various communications to Count Ostermann respecting the Swedish and French intrigues. He pretended ignorance, as he indeed always draws back in moments of difficulty. Thus, for instance, he was taken with the gout in the right hand, when, on the death of Peter II., he was to sign the document for limiting the

* State-paper Office, Russia, vol. xxx.

power of the emperor. He is a fair-weather pilot, who in storms keeps under hatches, and will always lay by when the Government is not settled.

"The Prince of Brunswick was more open; he confessed that they had strong suspicions that something was carrying on by the French ambassador and Mr. Nolken. His highness owned that the close connexion with the Princess Elizabeth's surgeon, the Hanoverian Lestocq, under pretence of being his physician, had been taken notice of. That La Chetardie often goes to the Princess Elizabeth, even by night, and in disguise; and as there was no indication of gallantry in the case, the motives must have been political. The prince added, that if that princess's conduct should clearly appear equivocal, she would not be the first in Russia who had been shut up in a monastery, which (I believe) of all things in the world would not please her, and might be also a dangerous expedient, for she has not one bit of nun's flesh about her, and she is extremely well beloved and very popular.

"It was high time to dismiss the intolerable Münnich, who had already again paid visits to the Princess Elizabeth, and was thinking of a new revolution. The prince related that he had caused the marshal to be watched strictly for several nights after his dismissal, and in case he should go out of an evening, and steer his course towards the Princess Elizabeth, have him seized either dead or alive.

"At length, however, Ostermann went so far into the matter as to ask me whether I thought it advisable to arrest Lestocq? I replied, he must know better than I, and have more proofs in hand; for

that without them, he being so closely attached to Princess Elizabeth, who makes use of him as her body physician, such a step must be a very sensible mortification to her highness, and might lead to a too premature discovery of the motives of it. Ostermann agreed to this, and I added that, in order not to give offence, I had avoidéd any intimate acquaintance with Lestocq, but had been sometimes to his house. Thereupon Count Ostermann advised me to invite him to dinner, that he loved a good glass of wine, and might perhaps open himself. To this I made no answer, for I believe that if ambassadors are reckoned to be spies for their masters, they are not spies for others. Nor does my health allow me *torquere mero.*

"The future is uncertain; the regent Anne appears to have understanding, penetration, good nature, and humanity, but she is certainly of too retired a temper. She suffers when she is in public, passes the greatest part of her time in her favourite Mademoiselle Mengden's apartments, surrounded by that lady's relations. Mademoiselle Mengden's sister married Münnich's son; the favourite is without great parts or malice, but the regent is so extremely attached to her, that the passion of a lover for a new mistress is a jest to it.

"It would be better if the regent oftener appeared in public, with a little more affability, to which the people of this court have been used in former times, and would be infinitely taken with at present. On the other hand, the Princess Elizabeth is exceedingly obliging, affable, and by consequence very much personally beloved. She has, besides, the advantage

of being the daughter of Peter I. Nay, on the late arrest of the Duke of Courland, many believed that it was for their mother (*Matzka*) Elizabeth.

" Should the young emperor die, and then a contest break out between Anne and Elizabeth, affairs would be in a very critical state; and because the latter might perhaps never have any children, all eyes would be turned upon her nephew Peter (afterwards Peter III.) At all events, it would be advisable to treat Elizabeth with prudence, not to offend her in any way, and supply her with sufficient money. For, as she is addicted to her pleasures, she will squander all the money she can get upon them; which may not only lessen her character, and of course diminish her popularity, but also, while she is not pinched in her extravagances, we may say of her, as Shakspeare's Julius Cæsar says, 'Her highness will be too fat to be in a plot.'

" The nobles who have any thing to lose are mostly for that which actually is, and go with the stream. Most of them are inveterate Russians, and only violence and superior force hinder them from returning to the old course. For there is not one of them who would not wish Petersburg at the bottom of the sea, and all the conquered provinces at the devil, so they could but remove to Moscow; where, by being in the neighbourhood of their estates, they could live in greater splendour and with less expense. They will have nothing to do with Europe. They hate all foreigners, and would, at the most, only employ them in war, and then get rid of them. They equally abominate all voyages by sea, and would rather be sent to the very worst part of

Siberia than on board a fleet. The clergy have much influence, and give indications which announce uneasiness and embarrassment to the present government.

"The Prince of Brunswick wants a certain dignity in his behaviour, and more experience in business; however, he learns in Ostermann's school, and behaves with more mildness than before, for instance, to the Duke of Courland.

"On the 12th August*, the birth-day of the young emperor, everybody was at court, in gala in the morning, to make their compliments to the regent; and at last the young monarch was brought in Mademoiselle Julia Mengden's arms, for whom he has taken a great affection. She carried him through all the apartments, and every time she called majesty he put out his little hand to be kissed. The whole court was extremely delighted with his beauty, healthful look and behaviour, as he himself seemed to be with the crowd he saw. Afterwards the Princess Elizabeth, the Prince of Bevern, &c. dined together; and in the evening there was a ball, fireworks, &c.

"In the midst of European fêtes, ceremonies, disputes about precedence and the like, there appeared, by way of change, a chief of the Don Cossacks, named Krosno Tzockin; that is, red cheeks. He is turned of seventy, but has a great deal of desperate brutal courage. He has knocked off several score of his prisoners' heads; sometimes in cold blood, sometimes in drunken fits, but always, as he says,

* Dispatch of 26th August.

to keep his hand in; and has been wounded all over his body; on which occasions he only makes use of human fat by outward application, and inwardly a glass of brandy *.

"I again turned the conversation on the French intrigues, and Ostermann answered, 'The Princess Elizabeth's sentiments of love and affection to Russia were too great to allow her to give in to any such projects.'

"The birthday of the princess † was celebrated. The regent presented her a very fine jewel for her hair, from the young sovereign, and from herself a complete tea equipage in gold.

"The regent is jealous of her power, and will not give up any part of it to her husband ‡. Thus discord reigns among those who are at the head of affairs: Golofkin is against Ostermann and the foreigners, Elizabeth against Ostermann, the regent against Ostermann, &c.

"As the Persian ambassador did not pay a visit to the Princess Elizabeth, she took this very much amiss, and laid the blame upon Ostermann, but at the same time declared her attachment to the czar and the regent. The warmth and spirit with which she spoke on this occasion struck and surprized every body; and it is supposed that the grand duchess's visit to her highness on the 11th October, in the afternoon, was in order to calm her.

"A Russian party is forming here under the direction of the Austrian ambassador Botta, and count

* Dispatch of 12th September. State-paper Office, Russia, vol. xxxi.

† Dispatch of 16th September. ‡ Ibid., 13th October.

Golofkin, against Ostermann and the duke *, and the regent is mostly on their side.

Amidst this wavering, this internal disunion, this want of prominent characters, there needed only a bold venture to bring about a new revolution in the Russian fashion. The English ambassador Finch gives the following account in his dispatch of the 26th November:—

"The Princess Elizabeth, who is universally beloved and adored in this country, went yesterday morning, at one o'clock, to the barracks of the Preobraezenski guards, accompanied only by one of her chamberlains, Woronzow, Mr. Lestocq, and Mr. Swarz, who I think is her secretary; and putting herself at the head of 300 grenadiers, with their bayonets screwed, and grenadoes in their pockets, she marched directly to the court, where, after having made the proper dispositions, and possessed herself of the different avenues, she seized the young monarch and his little sister in their beds, the grand duchess and the duke in their beds, and sent them all, with the favourite Julia Mengden, to her house. The princess immediately after ordered Münnich, Ostermann, Golofkin, young Count Münnich, and several others, to be arrested.

"After all these orders had been executed with the greatest expedition, the princess returned to her own house, whither almost everybody in town immediately resorted, and before which the regiment of horse guards, and the three regiments of foot, were drawn up, and she was unanimously declared

* Dispatch of 14th November.

Sovereign of Russia, and the oath of fidelity taken to her. About seven she took possession of the winter palace, upon which the cannon were fired, &c.

"This revolution was accompanied by a series of appointments and arrests, liberations, banishments, and confiscations. There is no describing the insolence of the guards, since the last event, especially of those who were actors in it, to whom court is paid, as if they were masters here, which they think themselves, and perhaps with too much reason.

"Ostermann does not behave with the same intrepidity as Münnich. The French ambassador still continues prime minister*. Great court is paid to him; he publicly kisses and is kissed by the Janissaries in the drawing-room.

"On the empress's birth-day there were balls, illuminations, &c. She has declared M. Lestocq her body physician, with a pension of 7000 rubles a year†, and the charge of actual privy councillor, which gives him the rank of a general-in-chief. He is to have the direction of the medical college. Her majesty gave him also her picture set in jewels of the value of 20,000 rubles, which he wears about his neck with a blue ribbon. His wife was at court in the morning in a stiff-bodied gown, and at a ball in the evening, where everybody thought themselves exceedingly happy in the honour of dancing with her.

"Her majesty has declared the 300 grenadiers her life company; the private men are all to have the rank of lieutenants; the corporals and serjeants, of

* Dispatch of 15th of December. † Dispatch of 19th Dec.

captains and majors; and the six who had the greatest share in the late affair, lieutenant-colonels; the ensign, brigadier; the two second-lieutenants, of major-generals, and the first-lieutenant, of a lieutenant-general. They are to be quartered in houses which her majesty has bought for that purpose just by the palace. She herself is to be captain, and has ordered her grenadier's cap and amazon dress to be made, to appear at their head.

"The commission of state prisoners meets at the court palace. Her majesty is constantly at the Tribune, where she can see and hear everything without being seen, as she says, to prevent favour or injustice. This declaration, with the general confiscations previous to any hearing in defence, cannot be reconciled but by the constant practice of this court on such occasions. They speak also of the application of the knout to the prisoners.

"Münnich was before the inquisition, for there is nothing in this country, at least in such cases, which deserves the name of court of justice. He told the commissioners to their face, that he was not more guilty than they. Lestocq's ordinary discourse is a continued egotism. I proposed, ordered, this and that. So, too, he says, he has appointed an ambassador to London."

The following extracts are from the dispatches of the year 1742*:—"The proceedings against the prisoners continue; it is impossible to conceive the inhumanity of the commissioners towards the unfortunate prisoners, which grows worse and worse,

* State-paper Office, Russia, vol. xxxiii. Dispatch of the 2nd of January.

and, it is said, by the express commands of those who are present to prevent injustice. But it is to be feared that private piques and personal revenge prevail where they might be least expected, and are least becoming.

"One of the new lieutenants affirmed that field-marshal Münnich had told him, on the nightly attack of the Duke of Courland, that it was intended to place the Princess Elizabeth on the throne. Münnich denied this, and upon the confrontation, the lieutenant offered to receive the knout, provided that, if he maintained this assertion under that torture, the old field-marshal should undergo it in his turn; who, rather than be exposed to that indignity, owned the accusation; however, made it so appear, to those who certainly knew, that the great duchess herself desired the officers and soldiers that accompanied Münnich on that expedition to follow his orders.

"The new counsellors do not agree together*, and the empress thinks ill of their heads, and still worse, of their hearts. I know not one here, who would pass for a tolerably honest man in another country.

"A subaltern officer was sent after the deposed czar and his parents, to give one of the great duchess's chambermaids the knout, without saying why, and immediately returned."

After the inquiry, as it was called, into the conduct of the prisoners, was ended, the ambassador relates, on the 19th of February:—"Count Ostermann, Münnich, Golofkin, President Mengden, the high steward Löwenwolde, and the secretary Jacoblitz,

* Dispatch of the 5th of January.

were yesterday brought to the scaffold before the college. First of all, about ten o'clock, Ostermann, whom Elizabeth hated the most, was carried in a chair, when the enumeration of the crimes laid to his charge, containing five sheets of paper, was read to him by a secretary. His excellency stood all that time barcheaded, in his grey hairs, and with a long beard, and with an attentive but firm countenance, listening to it. At last his sentence was pronounced, which as I hear was, to be broke on the wheel. However, no preparations for so terrible an execution were there: instead of them, there were two blocks with axes by them; and he was immediately drawn forward, out of his chair, by the soldiers, and his head laid on one of the blocks, when the executioner approached, and unbuttoning the collar of his shirt, and night-gown he had on, laid bare his neck; the ceremony took up about a minute, when it was declared to him that his capital punishment was by her majesty changed into perpetual banishment; when, after having made a sort of inclination of his head, he immediately said (and these were the only words he uttered), 'Pray give me my wig and cap again;' which he immediately put on, and then buttoned his shirt-collar and night-gown without the least change in his countenance.

"The sentence of the other five who stood below, was also read to them; Münnich was to be quartered, and the others beheaded, but the change into banishment was as soon declared to each. The four had all long beards; but the field-marshal was shaved, well dressed, and with as erect, intrepid, and unconcerned a countenance, as if he had been at the head of an army or at a review. And from the

very beginning of his process, he has always behaved in the same manner before his judges, and in his way from the citadel and back; he always affected to joke with his guards, and constantly told them, that in some actions before the enemy, when he had had the honour to command them, they had thought him a brave man, and they should find him so to the end.

"Münnich manifested the same firmness in taking leave of his family*."

"Upon this occasion, those whose humanity and generosity lead them rather to insult than to pity people in distress, affect to talk much of the providence of God and His divine judgments, which I believe it would better become them to adore, than to pretend to penetrate; besides that it would be more natural for them to reflect seriously on which of them the lot may fall next!"

As the succeeding dispatches of the ambassador seldom touch upon important subjects, I will extract some detached passages, which appear to be not uninteresting.

"The Duke of Holstein arrived here on the 5th February. He is little for his age, but was received with solemnity, and the whole court kissed his hand†. The empress is governed by prejudice, passion, and revenge."

Mr. Wich, the successor of the ambassador Finch, accompanied the empress to Moscow‡, of which he says, "It is the most disagreeable and the dirtiest place I ever was in. The French," he continues,

* Dispatch of 20th January. † Dispatch of 6th February.
‡ Dispatches of 24th and 27th May, and 7th of June.

"spend much money in Russia. The High Chancellor Czerkaski is indolent, the two brothers Bestucheff are timid. As the empress is fond of hunting, and is generally very tired in the evening, the ministers often have no opportunity to make their reports to her*." "To-day, the 7th November, 1742, the Duke of Holstein was anointed and baptized at Moscow, by the name of Peter Fedorowitz. The ceremony was performed by the Archbishop of Novgorod, assisted by several bishops; and after that prelate had made a short oration to the duke, and his highness had repeated the confession of faith, he received the sacrament. The Czarina declared him her successor, and conferred on him the title of Great Duke of Russia.

"The proposal to place Peter on the Swedish throne was rejected, and interest made for the Duke-administrator of Holstein.

"I brought Lestocq to a reconciliation with Messrs. Bestucheff, and prevailed on him to take a pension from his majesty the king of England, of yearly 600*l.*† He was highly gratified, promised much, but at the same time is paid by France. The empress hates and fears the king of Prussia.

"The Russian nobles love above all things to live at their ease, and to tyrannise over their miserable boors, who are the greatest slaves in the world.

"I am informed that they intend at Paris to choose the handsomest young nobleman‡ they can find in

* State-paper Office, Russia, vol. xxxiv. Dispatches of 21st October and 7th November.

† Dispatches of 22nd November and 15th December.

‡ Dispatches of 16th December, 1742, and 2nd July, 1743, vol. xxxvii.

France, and send him hither as ambassador. This is not a bad scheme, and they may found great hopes thereupon. 'A younger man and a new face,' says Wich, 'will do perfectly well at this court.'

"The empress frequently appears in man's clothes, and the ornament of the garter would, I am sure, please her above all things*. This government is neither right settled nor sound at the bottom, and will be always liable to fluctuations and sudden revolutions, and if the Czarina does not change her conduct, and apply herself, more than she has hitherto done, to the internal affairs of the empire and foreign affairs, she will sink in the opinion of her people; making but an indifferent figure at home, and none at all abroad. Never a princess in Europe came to the throne with greater appearances of making a glorious figure in Europe, and Providence has sufficiently endowed her with all the qualifications and talents which are necessary to make her beloved and respected by her subjects and other nations. But her attention to her pleasures spoils all, and will at the end produce irreparable mischief."

* Dispatches of 25th January and 29th April, 1743, vol. xxxvi.

CHAPTER XVII.

Frederick and Lord Hyndford on the State of Public Affairs—Hyndford's Prejudices—Frederick's Frugality—The Army—The Recruiting System—Frederick II. and Charles VII.—Frederick and Austria—Hyndford against Frederick—The King's Raillery, Activity, and Reserve—Preparations for War.

In consequence of the treaties of peace of Breslau and Berlin, Frederick II. withdrew from the theatre of war; he continued however to be a very attentive observer of the progress of events, and was by no means without influence on them. He undoubtedly saw clearer on some points than Lord Hyndford, who was still unable to comprehend the king, or to come to a right understanding with him. I subjoin various particulars from his dispatches, according to the order of time.

On the 4th of August, 1742, he writes to Lord Carteret, the new minister for foreign affairs*:—"I presented to the king the preliminaries of peace guaranteed by England; this led to various political conversations, and then I said, 'Queen Maria Theresa will now cede nothing more to anybody.' *The King.*—'But do you think the queen will restore Bavaria?' 'I can make no doubt of it, if the emperor will quit the French alliance, and act like an emperor of Germany.' He seemed agreeably surprised with this, and again asked me, 'Are you sure of this?' I replied, that it was beyond doubt; and I further added, that if his Prussian majesty would

* State-paper Office, vol. lvii.

assist in the taking something from the French, I was of opinion that the king my master, and the other princes of Germany, would be willing to give it to the emperor. My lord, I ventured to go this length, in order to know whether his majesty would take a part in the war, but he waved this proposal.

"The king seems still to apprehend that sooner or later the house of Austria will endeavour to reconquer Silesia."

Nothing was more natural than that the king neither assented to this strange proposal, nor suffered himself to be pumped in so palpable a manner. On the 1st of August, Lord Hyndford writes, still more strangely:—"If the king could be touched, and would be contented to act a second part, as the house of Brandenburg has always done, he would be worthy of his weight in the balance of power." Even in 1740, it would have been absurd to think of determining and fixing for all future time the weight of a margrave of Brandenburg: but now, after the conquest of Silesia, to think of considering and estimating the state of things according to the antiquated standard, was an egregious mistake, which prevented an impartial view of other matters. Thus Lord Hyndford writes:—"He is augmenting his army every day, and spares even from the decency of his court equipage, from the acts of common generosity and even humanity, to turn every shilling to his military chest. As to his ministers, they may be honest, able, and well-meaning people, but they neither can nor dare to do anything whatsoever without particular instructions, and are even disavowed sometimes for what they have said or done by authority."

"Count Podewils," writes Hyndford on the 8th September*, "is in need of money, and will take it, if cautiously and secretly offered, to confirm him in the right way of thinking; and in fact this is the right way of working at this court." While Hyndford here brings heavy charges in general, he forgets that a few days before he described the ministers as honest men.

As early as the 10th September, the king of England grants "1000*l.* to the gentleman you mention." As this cannot be an answer to the dispatch of the 8th September, it is uncertain for whom this sum was intended: nay, from a letter of the 22nd of June 1743, Podewils appears to have received nothing, and on the 10th July 1743, much surprise is expressed in London, that Hyndford had kept that sum so long in his hands, and wished now to employ it for other purposes.

Hyndford thinks it very petty and mean that the king at a christening, at the house of one of his aides-de-camp, gave the nurse only eight dollars; but when the king made him a present of 10,000 dollars, he thought it very proper†.

On the 10th September, Frederick declared that if England began an offensive war against France, he did not think himself bound to take a part in it, and bring the principal burthen upon himself. Several of the English were very angry at this, for

* State-paper Office, Prussia, vol. xxxviii.

† Dispatch of the 16th September and 6th October. Properly speaking, the question here is only of presents, such as are usual in foreign negotiations. In a dispatch of the 1st December, on the other hand, Hyndford mentions, that he had obtained, for money, secret information respecting the Prussian finances.

in this case the defensive alliance to be concluded availed them nothing; and on the 6th October, Hyndford wrote to the English minister for foreign affairs:—"The British ministers may know how far they can depend upon this faithless and ungrateful prince." But was it not very natural that the king would not make war, and conclude or maintain peace, for France or England, but for himself? Besides, his victories, not English generosity, had gained him Silesia.

In the same spirit of discontent, Hyndford wrote on the 3rd October and 1st December:—"The king has reduced the salaries; there is nothing but misery and complaints in the whole country. The army is chiefly composed of the dregs of others; and there is general discontent that the pay has not been increased, as promised." There were, doubtless, as many complaints at that time as at other periods; but Frederick justly abolished sinecures, and reserved his moderate resources for great and general purposes. Every system of recruiting too, as is now seen in England, has its dark side; but if the Prussian army had been without a nucleus of native warriors, enthusiastically attached to their king and country, how could it have been capable of the heroic deeds which even its adversaries admire?

In a dispatch of the 18th December, 1742, Lord Hyndford gives an account of another audience. "The king," he said, "complained of the unfavourable situation of the emperor. England might make war with France at its pleasure, but he must prevent further confusion in Germany, and if it were necessary to draw the sword, it would be better to-day than to-morrow. He then added, "Would it

not be much better for the king of England, who, as elector, gave his voice for the choice of this emperor, to detach him from the French, to whom he is under a necessity of having recourse, than to make war against the head of the empire, as I know he would now be satisfied with very moderate conditions?"

After Hyndford had set forth the reasons for which England supported the Austrians, and endeavoured to expel the French, the king continued: —"Hear, my lord! I do not care what becomes of the French; but I cannot suffer the emperor to be ruined nor dethroned; and if the king your master will open himself to me, with relation to the emperor, I know he may be detached from the French, and then of course they must quit the empire the best way they can." When Hyndford made many difficulties, the king said, "Bavaria is ready to conclude without the French, in fourteen days." When Hyndford asked, "How?" the king answered, "I do not propose that the queen of Hungary should yield anything, but that the emperor should have Bavaria restored to him, and that the empire should consent to the secularization of some bishopries for his use; for his country is so ruined, and he reduced so low, that he has hardly wherewithal to support himself!" I took the liberty to say, that indeed his Prussian majesty has taken care to choose a very convenient emperor for himself, who would not soon be in a condition to be troublesome to him. This produced some mirth on his Prussian majesty's part, who said, "It was as convenient for the other princes of Germany as for himself;" and I added, "Yes, if they were all equally powerful."

"The emperor," continues the ambassador, "had informed the king, with the utmost secrecy, through the chevalier Rosee, that he was ready to separate entirely from France, and thereby prepare the way for a general peace."

Hyndford concludes his dispatch with a remark which is at least very questionable:—"That if Frederick were to make war for the emperor and France, a great part of his generals and soldiers would abandon him, on account of ill treatment, and through hatred of the French."

In a subsequent dispatch of the 20th December, the ambassador writes:—"I spoke to the king at a ball, after he had taken, I suppose, a good deal of wine; he said, 'I hear that English troops are going to the Rhine; in this case they will have to do with me, for I will not suffer foreign troops to enter the empire, and disturb its tranquillity. They may make war on the French in Lorraine or elsewhere: but if they pass the Rhine, I shall be obliged to oppose them, and all the princes of the empire will do the same. Will your master make war against the emperor? I would have him remember that Hanover is at a very little distance from me, and that I can enter when I please.' At the end he said, 'Means may be found to settle the affairs of the emperor, if the king your master does not march his troops into the empire.'

"The king," adds the ambassador, "talks like a madman with regard to the affairs of the emperor, between whom and the French he pretends to make a distinction. Count Podewils asked me whether I had that conversation with the king before or after

dinner? 'After dinner.'—'Well, then, he must have been in wine!'"

It is possible that the king, in such a moment, expressed himself more warmly and more positively than usual: but after the most mature deliberation, he persisted in these declarations, and was invited to do so by many German princes.

While Hyndford took great offence at the above declarations, the French on their side designated it as partiality and treachery that the king would allow the English to make war upon France out of Germany, without assisting them, as he was bound to do.

The year 1743 was passed by Frederick in considering of various plans, but gave no occasion for important resolutions; and accordingly Hyndford's dispatches touch only on detached subjects.

On the 8th January* he writes:—"The king is very polite to me; for it is always to be observed, that when he expects an answer of consequence, or that he has any scheme in his head, he caresses the minister from that power with which he thinks he has the most to do."

Lord Hyndford had been at Prague, and had spoken to the queen, the grand-duke, and old count Stahremberg. "The court of Vienna," he writes, "has no sort of intention to enter into any separate dealing with his Prussian majesty; and it gave me a very sensible pleasure to find that they are all of them so fully informed of this prince's character, that they are of opinion that it is necessary to amuse

* State-paper Office, Prussia, vol. lix.

him. Count Stahremberg told me, that the king had made an offer to the queen, of assisting her with some troops, without making any proposals or terms, or waiting for an answer (?); but he desired the court of Vienna to propose the terms. They will be very cautious in either receiving his proposals, or in sending any themselves.

"The more fortunate that the Austrians are," says Hyndford, erring in his prophecy*, "the more will the king fear, and the sooner will he remain neutral.

"The king, both in public and private company at Potsdam," continues the ambassador†, "has been undervaluing the goodness and discipline of our troops, so far as to offer wagers that we would not fight; or if we were forced to that, we should be beat. And the last time he was in Berlin, he had the imprudence to say to a certain foreign minister, that he should be glad to see the English and French army give battle, for that it was equal for him which had the better of it. And even in this speech his hypocrisy, as well as foolishness, appeared, since it is certain, by what follows, that he would the French might be successful."

Three days after Lord Hyndford had accused the king of hypocrisy and foolishness, and was so angry with him for not being entirely in favour of England, he himself writes ‡:—"The greatest advantage which Maria Theresa will have from the peace of Bavaria will be that of crushing this prince. For, besides the absolute necessity which he will lay all his neighbours under, of keeping great armies, he will, upon

* Dispatch of 20th May. † Ibid., 6th July, vol. lx.
‡ Ibid., 9th July.

all occasions when he can see the least advantage to himself, join with the common enemy to destroy those who are his best friends; for he regards no power, either in heaven or earth, farther than he is afraid of them.

"At his levee he dealt his satires round, to all the foreign ministers, insomuch that scarce a prince in Europe escaped his ill-natured tongue*. He seems to be more occupied with preparations for operas and balls than for some time before. Mr. Voltaire is returned to this place, and is constantly with his Prussian majesty†, who seems resolved to give him a subject for a poem, upon the diversions of Berlin. Nothing is talked of here but Voltaire; he reads his tragedies to the queen and the princesses till they are in tears, and he outdoes the king in satires and extravagant sallies. Nobody is reckoned polite here who has not his head or pocket full of this poet's compositions, or who does not speak in rhyme.

"I was lately with the king at the opera. The curtain was drawn up only a little way‡, so that nothing was to be seen but the legs of some French dancers, who were practising. 'This,' said the king to me, 'perfectly well represents the French ministry, legs without a head.' M. de Valory had, however, heard these words, and whispered to me, 'This is my portion for this evening, I shall pocket it.'

"To the great offence of many here, M. de Valory wears an ear-ring of princess Czernicheff§; still

* Dispatch of 15th July.
† Ibid., 5th October.
‡ Ibid., 29th October, 1743.
§ Ibid., 30th November.

greater sensation was occasioned by his having a lady Kalkstein indecently painted as a white hen, and himself as a black cock.

"Frederick II. writes his letters to Paris and to the emperor with his own hand, and keeps all in his own strong box*. Even Podewils learns nothing of them. The king never did, I may say never will, act on any good system; he does not know himself what he will or will not do; he is never in the same mind for twenty-four hours together. He has begun all kinds of negotiations with Bavaria and France, and intends to send Count Rothenburg to Paris†. In order to try his capacity, the king took upon himself the part of the French minister, brought forward all possible difficulties and objections to his own proposals, without sparing himself in the least. Rothenburg refuted them all with so much ability, that the king at length said, 'If you speak as well, and make use of such arguments, you will certainly succeed.'"

"It must be the constant object," says Hyndford, "of English policy to depress the house of Brandenburg‡. So long as the wings of this insatiable, ambitious prince are not clipped, he will always be as dangerous to the liberty of Germany and the repose of Europe as France itself. He puts me in mind of a sort of ladies who, having lost their own character, are the first to cry out against their neighbours; he has more of the chicaning attorney in him

* State-paper Office, Prussia, vol. lxii, Dispatches of 25th January, 18th February, and 12th May, 1744.

† Dispatches of 22d February, 1744. ‡ Ibid., 28th April.

than of a hero*; he is more in fear of Russia than of God."

"Preparations for war are observed†; but from the confusion of marches, counter-marches, &c. purposely contrived by the king, nobody can make out what his real object is. He was heard to say‡, that if he imagined his shirt, or even his skin, knew what he intended to do, he would tear them off."

Six days afterwards, the 10th August, the king invaded Bohemia.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Second Silesian war—France and Spain—Mistresses of Louis XV.—Scandal—Death of Fleury—Character of the French—Sweden—Russia—Peter III. and Catherine—Plan to give Prussia to Poland—Indolence of Elizabeth—Venality of the Russians—Scarcity of money at Petersburg—Elizabeth, on Frederick II.—The Princess of Zerbst—Bestucheff—Adulation of the Empress.

It is not my intention to enumerate here the motives of the second Silesian war, from Frederick's history of his own times, and other well-known sources; and still less to detail the events of the campaign of 1744. The king's expectations were certainly not fulfilled, and the death of Charles VII. on the 20th January, 1745, was the first event that gave a new impulse to the diplomatic negotiations. I shall take leave to insert here some detached extracts from

* Dispatch of 18th July. Hyndford speaks much of the little evil spirit, Count Finkenstein. Dispatch of 10th June.

† Ibid., 28th July.

‡ Ibid., 4th August.

preceding dispatches, without making the useless attempt to connect them together. In the first place, some particulars from France and Spain.

As early as the 14th October, 1741, a treaty had been concluded between the two powers *: Spain engages to pay 50,000 French troops, and France on its part to obtain for Spain an advantageous peace with England. All the stipulations are loose and equivocal. From a dispatch of the 28th March, 1742†, it appears, that it was calculated in Paris England would not come to any decisive resolution. For money the English ambassador obtained news in abundance; but not unfrequently the price asked for what was offered was too high for him. There are complaints of the distress in France and Spain: in particular the clergy of the latter country refuse to pay 8 per cent. of their revenues, as enjoined by a papal bull. The complaints of the Spaniards are very loud in the autumn of 1743, of the tardiness and insufficient help of the French‡.

In Paris, besides, there was all kind of scandal, in conjunction with, and influencing the policy of, the government. Thus, to give at least one example, we find in a dispatch of the 12th November, 1742§: "To all appearance the king has got a new mistress: Madame de Mailly, who has passed in the world, for several years, as the sole favourite (though for some time she was only a sharer with her sister, Madame de Vintimille), is now obliged to give way to another sister of hers, Madame de la Tournelle, and to leave the court. This affair has met with a good

* State-paper Office, France, vol. xc. † Vol. xcii.
‡ Vol. xciv. Dispatch of 3d October, 1743. § Vol. xcii.

deal of difficulty from Madame de la Tournelle, who, having a great advantage over her elder sister as to her person, which is very handsome, seemed resolved to make the best bargain she could for herself. At first her demands ran very high; she wanted to be declared the king's mistress to which title a considerable pension is annexed; she would have a house kept for her apart; she would not be at any of the king's parties at supper, but in company of her own choice; that she should see what company she pleased, at her own house; and when the king should think fit to go to see her, no party of hers should be broke off on his account. And lastly, without which all the rest would not do, she insisted that Madame de Mailly should be sent from court. It is not known what success she has in her other demands, but it is certain that Madame de Mailly is come to Paris, and Madame de la Tournelle is gone this day, with the king, to Choisy. It is scarcely to be imagined that this change will reach no farther than to the person of Madame de la Tournelle; the new lady will, to be sure, have favourites of her own enough, both women and men, and their influence may possibly reach even as far as to the minister."

On the 9th of January *, the pacific Cardinal Fleury died, by which the war party at court obtained a decided preponderance, though the popular opinion by no means coincided with it. "The generality of the people of France have expressed their dislike of this war with the queen of Hungary (dispatch of 4th September, 1743)† from the beginning.

* Dispatch of 30th January, 1743. France, vol. xciii.
† France, vol. xciii.

Every step has been with a kind of reluctance, and their misfortunes have been looked upon as what they deserved. But when they see a design to take so many provinces from them, it is not to be imagined in what a degree they are exasperated, saying, if the tenth is not sufficient for the service of the state, the king must take a fifth. In a word, whoever has studied the genius of the people of this country will find, that though they will bear a beating, they will not bear being insulted."

If we now turn to the North, we find that the hopes of Sweden, of recovering its lost provinces from the Russians, had wholly failed. It was obliged, by the treaty of Abo, to cede a part of Finland, and to see Peter, duke of Holstein, prefer the prospect of a Russian throne to the offers of Sweden. After a long series of intrigue, bribery, and foreign interference, Adolphus Frederick of Holstein-Gottorp was chosen successor to the throne. When, in the year 1744, he married Ulrica Eleanora*, sister of king Ferdinand II., the friendly relations between Sweden and Prussia seemed to be established for a long time.

Much also seemed to be gained, when after long negotiations the princess of Zerbst was chosen for the consort of Peter, heir to the throne of Russia. Catherine, at that time fifteen years of age, arrived at St. Petersburg in February, 1744, was received with great pomp, and married to Peter on the 1st of September, 1745†.

The Russian court still continued to be the theatre

* State-paper Office, Sweden, vol. lxxx. lxxxi.

† Dispatch of 11th February, 1744. Russia, vol. xxxviii.

of various intrigues; however, the endeavours of the Austrian ambassador Botta (August 1743), and of the French ambassador Chetardie (June 1744*), failed. The latter had presumptuously commenced a correspondence with Catherine's mother, and formed a plan to overthrow the whole ministry. The English ambassador endeavoured to obtain influence in a third direction. He writes, on the 10th September, 1744†:—"The Russian nobility, clergy, and nation, really think, that they are too powerful to be attacked in their own dominion; and that it is a matter quite indifferent to this empire what passes in the rest of Europe. This is a false maxim; we must destroy it if we can, though it takes strong root; and it is on this maxim, and Mardefeldt's assurances that it is an unvariable one, that the king of Prussia builds his present projects."

But about this time proposals of a very opposite nature were discussed. On the 8th October, 1744, the ambassador writes:—"I must tell your lordship in the greatest confidence, that Bestucheff's scheme is to prevail on the empress to take Prussia from its present master, and to give it to the Poles, who shall give up to Muscovy Pleskow, Smolensk, and their districts; and this we hope that Elizabeth may be induced to come into, from a motive of religion, for she makes a great show of it, and would by this measure bring many Greek Christians under her dominion. The clergy will certainly approve of the plan, and I believe that this is the only plan that can draw the empress into the war."

How the advocates of such plans can condemn

* Dispatch of Tyrawly, of 6th June, 1744. † Vol. xxxix.

the diplomacy of Frederick II. is difficult to conceive. Elizabeth, besides, had such reluctance to business*, and her expenses had so entirely drained her purse, that only the prospect that was opened of receiving foreign subsidies appeared to influence her.

These plans had certainly not escaped Frederick, on which account he sent a great deal of money to his ambassador Mardefeldt†, and caused 25,000 dollars to be offered to the two chancellors Bestucheff and Woronzow. "If," said Elizabeth, "the king of Prussia has so much money, take it from him." Perhaps this induced Maria Theresa to send them diamond rings.

On the 2d February, 1745, Mr. Tyrawly, an English plenipotentiary, writes from St. Petersburg‡: —"The king of Prussia speaks of the Russian mediation only because he is entirely ruined; but the empress would do much better in dividing the skin of the bear, which might possibly not be offered her another time. Bestucheff is pleased with this thought, but the Prussian arguments (the money) have made too strong an impression on Woronzow."

Lord Hyndford, who had been sent to St. Petersburg, writes §:—"I am afraid France will offer this court as much money to remain neutral, as we do to make them act, and you may easily guess which of the two proposals they will accept of."

Eight days later, the 21st May, he writes:—"The empress will never be brought to act directly against

* Dispatches of 27th September and 18th October, 1744.

† Dispatches of the 8th January and 19th January, 1745, vol. xl.

‡ Ibid.

§ Dispatch of 13th May, State-paper Office, Russia, vol. xli.

the king of Prussia, in conjunction with the troops of Austria or Saxony, and much less alone; for some people go so far as to say, that she has given the king of Prussia private assurance of this, and that she has even taken an oath upon it; and that it was with her knowledge and consent that he invaded Bohemia last year. Although the empress showeth such tenderness for the king of Prussia, which proceeds entirely from spite against the queen of Hungary, yet she is ready and willing to declare, and even to act openly, against France."

"The want of money continues here*, and has even increased since Elizabeth restored to the clergy 800,000 rubles which Peter I. took from them. A man concealed himself behind a curtain to murder the empress; the severest torture could not, however, extort a word from him. Elizabeth is in consequence in such continual terror, that she seldom stays above two days in one place, and few people know where she sleeps."

In a dispatch of the 1st October, 1745, the English ambassador† relates "how attempts were made gradually to turn the empress against Frederick II.; she said, 'He is certainly a wicked prince, and has not the fear of God before him, but turns every sacred thing into ridicule, and never goes to church. He is the Nadir Shah of Prussia‡.'

"The old princess of Zerbst, Catherine's mother, had taken much upon her, and was thus upon ill terms with the empress. She now took leave, fell at the empress's feet, and with a flood of tears asked pardon, if she had done anything to offend her

* Dispatch of the 7th June. † Russia, vol. xlii.
‡ Dispatch of the 3rd November.

majesty. The empress answered, that it was now too late to think of that, and that if she had been all along so humble, it would have been better for her. The empress is not at all pleased with the grand duke's behaviour, and she keeps a very watchful, strict eye over him, but she has been hitherto very fond of the duchess, who seems to be a good creature."

Cabals, intrigues, hopes, fears, bribery, licentiousness, continue to prevail alternately at the Russian court. It is not worth the while to go into the details; I add a couple of specimens: "Bestucheff plainly demanded money of the English ambassador, or at least a loan for many years, without interest. All objections made no impression, and the ambassador says, at the conclusion of his narrative*, 'My friend is certainly in the greatest distress imaginable; he owes to all the world.'"

Many dispatches were purposely written without cypher, that they might be opened, and read by the empress. In such a one Lord Hyndford writes†:—"Your lordship can hardly conceive how well the habit of an officer becomes the empress: I am persuaded that those who had not known her, would have taken her for an officer, were it not for her fine face. And indeed her majesty has the heart of a man and the beauty of a woman, and is worthy of the admiration of all the world."

* Dispatch of the 27th September, 1746, vol. xliv.

† Dispatch of the 30th November, 1745, vol. xlii.

CHAPTER XIX.

Maria Theresa—Frederick II. and Austria—War between France and England—Maria Theresa complains of England and Holland—Negotiations with Bavaria—The second Silesian War—Death of Charles VII.—Frederick II.'s Letter upon the Measures to be adopted—Reconciliation between Austria and Bavaria—England's Mediation between Prussia and Austria—Victory at Hohenfriedberg—Maria Theresa is for continuing the War—Frederick's Letter to his Ambassador Audrie—Treaty of Hanover—Fresh Negotiations in Vienna—Battles of Sorr and Kesselsdorff—Peace of Dresden.

If such praise as that we have just quoted were to be given to any of the female sovereigns of that time, it was not Elizabeth, but Maria Theresa, to whom it was due. Since hatred has died away and prejudices are fallen to the ground, she and Frederick II. shine with imperishable lustre; while Charles VII., Louis XV., Philip V., George II., and Elizabeth appear as subordinate characters in their train.

It was natural enough that after the conclusion of the peace of Breslau, Austria still entertained apprehensions of Prussia. Accordingly the English ambassador writes from Vienna on the 23rd of November, 1743*:—

"The king of Prussia continues to hold the best language; this court, however, has such manifest proofs of his Prussian majesty's late bad intentions, and of the readiness in which he holds every thing, to be able to invade these countries upon a moment's caprice from Silesia, that she does not think proper to be without preparation."

* State-paper Office, Austria, vol. cliii

There was besides no want of falsehood to inflame the hatred against Frederick. Thus it was said that he had caused 2000 children to be carried off from Silesia to Prussia*.

When France declared war against England on the 15th of March, 1744, Maria Theresa was highly rejoiced, and said†, "God himself has done a miracle for the preservation of Europe, in permitting the French in their blindness and presumption to declare war. I am no longer the only principal. Good God! if I would act like my allies."

The last exclamation was probably connected with Maria Theresa's complaints of England and Holland. She said‡ "the treaty of Breslau had been forced upon her, the hopes founded thereupon disappointed; she complained of the inaction of the latter part of last year, the inexecution of the treaty of Worms, not a single ship spared for her service, as if so great a fleet were out of a studied predilection for the king of Sardinia, and now the abandoning of the Low Countries, and of the dear pledge she had sent thither in the person of her sister. She exhorted, she conjured us, to write in the strongest manner, for which we needed only to represent in their true light her present agitation and resolutions. That agitation she expressed indeed with most energetic vivacity; and her resolution as a sovereign was, to submit to no dishonourable measure of peace, as long as she has an army, whatever might be the design of France, or of others. in letting them sweep away the Netherlands.

* Dispatch of the 26th February, 1744, vol. clv.
† Dispatch of the 27th April, 1744, vol. clvi.
‡ Dispatch of the 29th May.

"Another time the queen said, on the peace of Breslau*, she did not so much regret the loss of Silesia itself, as the acquisition of it by such a neighbour, with such a personal character; that her resolution was however to sit down quietly under this inconveniency, and neither to give umbrage to the king, or seek any occasion whatever to be the first to break that treaty; considering the king's character, it was highly necessary to bethink of all the means that could without offence to him be taken provisionally against his breaking with her. It is, however, thought the more improbable† that the king will break with her, as he and France have lost all influence in Russia."

On the 5th of August, 1744, (five days before Frederick's irruption into Bohemia) the English ambassador writes from Vienna‡:—"They are here to a man for making the emperor so easy with the restitution of Bavaria, and France so uneasy by all sorts of distresses, as to oblige them both to sacrifice Prussia to the possibility of settling a general peace by the recovery of Silesia."

The plans here alluded to are confirmed by Frederick's declaration, that he would not have secured his safety by remaining longer inactive.

The death of the emperor Charles VII. (on the 20th of January, 1745) appeared greatly to facilitate the solution of existing difficulties. Frederick there-

* Dispatch of 15th July.

† Dispatch of 4th July, Austria, vol. clvii.

‡ Ibid. In Saxony the king observed strict discipline, and, in particular, suffered no game to be shot. He said, in Potsdam, that his own sport should be, hunting of the saints in Bohemia. Prussia, vol. lxiii., dispatch of 18th August, 1744.

fore wrote on the 26th of January to Klinggräff, his ambassador in London*:—"I was informed yesterday evening by a courier, who was sent to me by my minister at the imperial court, that the emperor had died of the gout, which had reached his chest. This is an important event, which will cause many changes.

"You will not fail to speak immediately to my Lord Harrington, and say to him from me, that I wish to concert as soon as possible with England, as to what is to be done under these circumstances, provided that I find through it my safety and convenience secured."

In a second letter of Frederick's, written the following day, he says:—"As the death of the emperor is an event which will very considerably change the face of affairs, not only in Germany but in all the rest of Europe, it is necessary that you should communicate from me with my Lord Harrington, since the steps they take will either facilitate peace, or give rise to the greatest obstacles. You are to tell the secretary of state from me, that, as we so highly esteem his great talents and his just and equitable sentiments for the re-establishment of peace throughout Germany, I hope that he will confer confidentially with you, as to the opinion of the British court respecting this event, and as to its real sentiments in regard to a candidate for the imperial dignity, and how the death of the last emperor might be made available the more easily to bring about a peace, without suffering the house of Bavaria to be completely crushed, and to place on

* State-paper Office, volume, Prussian Ministers, No. 6.

the imperial throne a person who might be agreeable to his Britannic majesty and the English nation. You shall assure him that if they will without loss of time enter into the plan, which I have desired you to propose to Lord Harrington, I will readily co-operate with the views of England in the election of a new emperor, and if we are once agreed on this subject, it will not be difficult to make the rest of the electoral body enter into our views, and put an end to the troubles which now distract Germany, and which will continue to increase if an arrangement is not speedily made. That it is my sincere intention to go hand and hand with England, so soon as peace should be established between me and the queen of Hungary, as also with the house of Bavaria, on the just and equitable footing which I have named to Lord Harrington by you."

England, however, having many points to take into consideration, and to consult with its allies, Frederick (as it appears) received an unsatisfactory answer to this; and on the 12th April*, the English ambassador writes from Vienna:—"This court has started, and will push as far as it can the price of Silesia, at the very hazard of losing Italy. The imperial crown, without Silesia, is not worth the wearing."

To this hope the reconciliation between Austria and Bavaria†, 22nd April, appeared to add fresh expectations. The young elector of Bavaria also said to an Austrian minister:—"France has kept my ancestors under a continual pension. You see in

* State-paper Office, Austria, vol. clxii.
† Dispatch of 5th July, vol. clxiii.

what a condition I come to my estates. I hope I shall find a second (different?) France in the maritime powers."

Meantime, contrary to the expectations of Austria, Frederick had gained* the battle of Streigau or Hohenfriedberg, and, though not in Vienna indeed, yet in London, had called forth thoughts of peace. Accordingly on the 27th July, Lord Harrington writes to Mr. Robinson†:—"We must reduce the strength of our enemies by detaching, if possible, the king of Prussia from his unnatural and pernicious alliance with France. The king had made offers to us in March, and since then refuses absolutely to make any proposals, pretending that those he then made were communicated to France, and that he was thereby exposed to the hazard of being abandoned by that crown. But we hope he is ready to conclude on the footing of the treaty of Berlin, and I must say that I do not see how his majesty‡ can in the present melancholy and hopeless situation avoid to propose it to him. You may make this proposal, and endeavour to get it approved at Vienna."

Robinson hereupon proceeded to explain the state of affairs and the motives for this proposal. In his dispatch of the 4th August, he says:—"The queen, whom I had never seen so reserved, interrupted me but seldom, expressed her thanks for the friendship of England, and promised to consider everything

* 4th of June. † Ibid.

‡ "His majesty," I imagine, means the king of England, probably in reference to the landing of the Pretender in Scotland, who left Rome in January, 1744, and went to France. State-paper Office, France, vol. xciv. Dispatch of January.

with her ministers*. But whatever is resolved," she continued, "she could not spare a man out of the king of Prussia's neighbourhood; one or two regiments of foot and one or two of horse might perhaps be sent to Italy, but the rest would in time of peace, as well as in time of war, with this king of Prussia, be absolutely necessary for the immediate defence of her person and her family.

"I observed that 70,000 men were not required for this purpose, and the arguing with such diffidence against the king was proving too much. She demanded why there are less hopes of detaching France than of detaching Prussia? I said, 'Because the king would more easily make a peace, and preserve what he had, than France give up, as it must, what it had acquired, and was in so fair a way of acquiring, in the Low Countries.' Maria Theresa said, 'Prince Charles was able to give another battle.' 'That battle,' I made answer, 'if won would not recover Silesia: if lost, your majesty is lost at home.' She said, 'If I must make peace with him to-morrow, I would give him battle this evening. But why so pressing now? why this interruption of operations by no means despaired of? Give me only to October, and then you may do what you will.'

"'That October,' I said, 'would be the end of the campaign in all parts, and would be the very fatal moment when, it is feared, we shall be obliged to accept whatever conditions France and Prussia continuing together shall impose upon us.' 'That would be true,' she answered, 'were the same time to be

* Austria, vol. clxiii.

taken up, as you propose, in marching from Bohemia to the Rhine, and from the Rhine to the Low Countries. But as for my troops, I know none of my generals who would not refuse to command such marching, or rather inactive armies; and as for the grand duke and Prince Charles, they shall not. The grand duke is not so ambitious as you imagine of an empty honour*, much less to enjoy it, under the tutelage of the king of Prussia. But I shall write to know his sentiments fully. The imperial crown, is it compatible with the fatal deprivation of Silesia? Good God! Give me only to the month of October, I shall then at least have better conditions.'"

In conclusion Robinson remarked,—"Without peace with Prussia, the king of England cannot reckon either upon the votes of parliament or on retaining Holland in the alliance." Notwithstanding all his representations, the ambassador received a long answer in the negative from the court of Vienna.

England and Prussia did not however suffer themselves to be hereby diverted from pursuing their plans, and on the 5th of August, 1745, Frederick wrote from his camp at Chlum the following letter to his ambassador, Andrie, at Hanover †:—

"I have received your report of the 24th of July last. After considering what Lord Harrington said to you, on the part of the king his master, respecting his intentions to mediate a peace between me and

* The imperial crown.

† State-paper Office, Prussian ministers.

the queen of Hungary, it is my will that you shall reply to Lord Harrington, that I had not indeed reason to place much confidence in the king of England, after all that has passed; but, that to show to all Europe my readiness to allay the troubles which distract it, and to convince his Britannic Majesty of the sincere desire which I have never ceased to entertain to act in concert with him, I am ready to enter again into negotiations, but that the recollection of what has passed obliges me to require the following conditions:—

"1. That I shall not suffer myself to be amused by anything, and that I shall prosecute my operations on all sides, with the greatest vigour, till the signing of the preliminaries.

"2. That the preliminaries must be agreed upon within four weeks, reckoning from the day on which this dispatch shall arrive at Hanover, and the treaty of peace be concluded within a month afterwards."

I subjoin two draughts of these preliminaries, of which Lord Harrington may choose that which he likes best.

"A. The king of Prussia shall retain Silesia as it was ceded to him by the treaty of Breslau, with the addition of the towns of Troppau, Jägerndorf, and Hotzenplotz.

"B. Condition sine quâ non. The Empire, England, Holland, Saxony, and all the powers of Europe, shall guarantee Silesia to the king of Prussia.

"C. The king of Poland shall give to the king of Prussia an act of cession of Silesia.

"D. The king engages to give his vote, as elector, to the grand duke.

"E. A mutual guarantee of the States of Germany between the two belligerent parties.

"F. That an exchange shall be made between some parts of Silesia, which are enclosed in Lusatia, for the —— (or the little town of Fürstenberg with its custom-house, situated on the Oder), which shall come to the king of Prussia, so that neither of the two parties shall lose by this exchange.

"G. All the prisoners shall be immediately set at liberty without ransom, and exchanged with good .... * within a time which shall be agreed upon. The sick and wounded, of which a list shall be given, shall be set at liberty after their recovery.

"H. The town of Cosel, with all its fortifications, shall be restored to the king immediately after the signing of the preliminaries, with its artillery and ammunition, in the same state as when it was taken.

"I. The king of Prussia and the queen of Hungary, mutually engage not to fetter or hinder the commerce of their respective subjects."

The following is the second scheme, the only change of which is in the first article:—

"Silesia shall be under the dominion of the king of Prussia, as it was ceded to him by the treaty of Breslau; but to indemnify the king for the expenses of the war, England engages to pay him a million sterling. N. B. There will be some abatement to make in this sum if the main part of these proposals is agreed to; but in case Lord Harrington will not hear of it, you must endeavour to direct this article, so that I may no longer be obliged to pay the debts which have been contracted on Silesia, but that they

* The words are wanting in the MS.

shall be henceforward paid by the queen of Hungary. In a word, you must negotiate on this subject as much as you can, and as soon as my troops shall have set foot in Saxony, Hanover will be eager to conclude.

"You must always declare that my operations will be no hindrance whatever to the negotiations for peace, and that all hostilities will cease everywhere as soon as the preliminaries are signed. The principal point to be insisted on is that of the securities.

"You may also tell my Lord Harrington that my present situation is very advantageous, and that I should not otherwise trouble myself about the election of the grand duke; that if the queen of Hungary, as a member of the empire, now made war on the emperor, the same reason was good for me that was good for her, and that that would not make any change in my resolutions. That I might expect more events favourable and advantageous to my cause than the contrary, and if I assented to his ideas, it was from love of peace and the public good; but that I should immediately perceive, according to the facility which England shall manifest in this negotiation, how far its intentions are sincere. That I was moreover sure, and persuaded, that this peace was in the hands of the king of England; that he held the purse-strings, and consequently the court of Vienna was obliged to conform to his intentions. But that I repeated I was going to prosecute my operations more vigorously than ever; which however would not hinder peace; and that if the plan which I have just sent were agreed to, hostilities would cease at once. I pray God to have you in his holy keeping."

The bases here laid down led to the conclusion of the treaty of Hanover on the 26th of August, by which Silesia was again assigned to the king of Prussia, and guarantees for it promised. Lord Harrington writes to Robinson*:—"Shew the convention to queen Maria Theresa, under a promise of secrecy, as the basis of a future peace, and endeavour to induce her to accept it. Nothing is required of her except the confirmation of the treaty of Breslau, but the king of England has had the greatest trouble to induce the king of Prussia to be satisfied with these conditions. An armistice must be immediately concluded for the purpose of further negotiations."

It was said in the treaty, queen Maria Theresa has accepted and entirely adopted it, as far as she is any ways concerned in it; the principal thing however still remained, namely, to obtain this consent which had been taken for granted.

On the 4th of September, Robinson reports†:—The king of Prussia has published the contents of the convention, and demanded an armistice, in consequence, from the prince of Lorraine. The prince granted it, till the return of a courier from Vienna. Count Uhlefeld said to me that the king of Prussia had declared that Lord Harrington had signed in the queen's name. All this was taken much amiss in the king of Prussia, and directions were sent to prince Charles to go on in his own way."

As Robinson received no answer from the court of Vienna‡, he asked Count Uhlefeld what would be the result of his new negotiations and proposals?

* Austria, vol. clxiii. Letter of 26th August. † Vol. clxiv.
‡ Dispatch of 8th September.

And the latter answered, "to destroy the Prussian army, and thereby find a *real* security against the king of Prussia. The queen herself had been heard to say that, as Prince Charles of Lorraine had regaled her coronation at Prague with the news of a victory, she had acquainted him with the pleasure it would be to her to have the coronation at Francfort celebrated in the same manner; adding to the person she was speaking to, that if the news of the victory arrived soon, it would not spoil matters. All here reckon on a victory over the Prussians."

Lord Harrington was very much dissatisfied with these delays. On the 13th of September he expresses the highest dissatisfaction and surprise under such an uncertainty. "Urge the queen to declare if she will, or will not, come to an accommodation with Prussia."

Robinson could do nothing; the queen avoided him, and the ministers gave evasive answers. Frederick's victory at Sorr, or Trautenau, on the 30th September, changed the opinion of the court of Vienna. "The news of the loss of this battle," says Robinson*, "transpired on the 4th October, the very day that the dowager empress's court was celebrating the coronation of the emperor at Francfort. It is reported that Frederick has said, 'As the Austrians have not been able to beat me this time, they never will beat me.'"

Respecting the battle at Sorr, the English plenipotentiary Laurence † relates that the king, contrary to the first plan, secretly directed his aide-de-camp

* Dispatch of 6th October, vol. clxiv.

† Dispatch of 25th January, 1746. State-paper Office, Prussia, vol. lxv.

to have all the baggage brought to the right wing instead of the left; the Austrians fell upon it, and by this stratagem the battle was gained. On the following day the king denied that he had given this order, on which those who had lost their baggage demanded if Mr. Von Podewils, the aide-de-camp, should be brought before a court martial. The king, however, protected him, ordered that no more should be said of it, and made good an eighth part of the loss.

The greater the misfortune of Austria was, the more bitter were its complaints. Robinson writes, on the 30th October:—"Count Uhlefeld says this negotiation is like that of Utrecht. The design is to substitute Brandenburg to Austria, sacrificing the queen, suspending the negotiations with Bavaria and Munster, attempting to debauch the Saxons from the Austrian alliance. Instead of our detaching Prussia from France, we should only succeed in detaching the empress from ourselves."

The emperor declared there was no calm to be expected in the empire till the king was more weakened; and on another occasion the emperor said:—"I am left in the last uncertainty, to shift as well as I can, and am at present exposed to another catastrophe like that of Utrecht."

More than by all these resolutions and threats was effected by the victory of the Prussians under Prince Leopold Von Dessau, at Kesselsdorf, on the 15th December, followed on the 25th December by the peace of Dresden, which confirmed, in all the essential points, the treaty of Breslau.

In the summer of 1746, Prussia repeatedly insisted that Austria should obtain the guarantee of the

treaty by the empire *; and Austria, on the other hand, required the guarantee of Prussia for the Pragmatic Sanction.

A book was published at Vienna, in which it was affirmed that the treaty of Dresden was extorted, and was no longer obligatory than while the injured party was not in a capacity to break it. Prussia required that the book should be burnt by the hangman. Another dispute arose on the question whether Prussia was bound to include a certain Count Henkel in the general amnesty.

In September, 1747, the two courts were on the best terms. The Prussian ambassador Count Podewils went from Vienna to the king, who was at Neisse, and returned with very satisfactory and obliging compliments to the emperor and empress†. Both expressed, in the most cordial manner, their personal regard and friendship for his Prussian majesty.

CHAPTER XX.

Maria Theresa's Dissatisfaction with England—Frederick II. and France—His Negotiations with England—Dispute about the Barrier Treaty—The Duke of Newcastle, or Prussia and Austria—Legge's Negotiations with Frederick—The Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle—Newcastle's Justification of the English Policy—The Jews and Protestants in Austria—Frederick II.'s Mode of Life and Health—Rothenburg—Mad. Barbarini.

THE war between Austria and France continued, but Maria Theresa was afraid that England would conclude a separate peace‡; which she designated

* Dispatch of 27th August, 1746. Austria, vol. clxviii.
† Dispatch from Vienna of 16th September, 1747, vol. clxxii.
‡ Dispatch of 5th August, 1547.

as the greatest misfortune. She said—"For God's sake let us not be divided, nor be running into separate measures." Austria would not make any more sacrifices, and turned its forces rather to Italy than to the Netherlands, because England and Holland could not abandon the latter to the French.* "The empress," said Bartenstein, "would only have to withdraw into her shell, and to learn to be superior to events."

In April, 1748, Robinson received instructions to induce Maria Theresa to further cessions for the sake of peace. She answered †:—"You who had such a share in the sacrifice of Silesia—you who contributed more than any person in procuring the conditional cessions made to the King of Sardinia, do you still think to persuade me? No, I am neither a child nor a fool! Your accounts about the Dutch are exaggerated. A countenance may still be held, and there is still force to support that countenance. If you will have an instant peace, make it. I can accede; I can negotiate for myself; and why am I always to be excluded from negotiating my own business? My enemies will give me better conditions than my friends; at least, they will not refuse a peace, which they want as much as we, for any dispute remaining between me and the King of Sardinia, about a little territory more or less, or for the interpretation of a treaty. And who tells you Spain desires so much Parma and Placentia? She will rather have Savoy. Place me where I was in Italy before the war, and I will establish the Infant. But your King of Sardinia must have all, without one

* Dispatch of 12th July, 1746, vol. clxvii.
† Dispatch of 1st May, 1748. Austria, vol. clxxiv.

thought of care for me. The treaty of Worms, then, was not made for me, but for him singly. Good God! how have we been used by that court! There is your King of Prussia too. Indeed, all these circumstances at once rip up too many old and make real new wounds."

A day previous to the writing of this dispatch, the 30th of April, the preliminaries of peace had been concluded at Aix-la-Chapelle, between France, England, and Holland. On the 1st of May, the English plenipotentiary Legge had his first audience of Frederick*, of which, and also of a second which he had on the 11th of May, he says:—"The king expressed his sympathy for the king of England, and wished for a cordial union. The king's heart is still German, notwithstanding the French embroideries which appear upon the surface†. The king said, on the 12th of May, that from the extracts which I had sent him, he was very sensible of the king of Great Britain's good intentions towards him. The king utterly disclaimed all connexions with France, all desire of future connexion, and added strong reasons for his opinion, some of which I remember were, that he knew France was at too great a distance to assist him as critically (as?) he might require; that nobody was long the better for an alliance with France; and that he was too well acquainted with the temper of the court of France not to know the perpetual strong demands they made upon those who are called their allies; and that to be an ally of France was in effect to be her slave.

* State-paper Office, Prussia, vol. lxvii.

† Legge understood Frederick's character better than the prejudiced Lord Hyndford.

"That, on the contrary, he knew the maritime powers were so situated as to be able to assist him, and that the subsisting foundation of mutual interest and the strongest motives, connexion of religion, policy, and blood, would make an alliance (with England more especially) solid and to be depended upon. That therefore, however circumstances might have made him occasionally resort to France, he knew where the true and substantial interests of his country lay, and was ready, as soon as a general peace was made, which would entirely divest him of all obligations to France, to enter into the most strict and zealous union with the maritime powers, for the future security and liberties of Europe.

"Upon which he gave me his hand, and desired I would write to my court for full power and instruction in relation to the concerting a defensive alliance with Great Britain, as soon as the peace was concluded." The idea that he was *now* to do something for England, and step out of the decided neutrality, was declined by the king, who said that France omitted no means whatever to have made him do it, on her behalf, which he always had, and ever should constantly refuse. That though he had no reason to be at all contented with the general conduct of France towards him, yet, on the other hand, he had received such obligations and assistance from her, at the beginning of his difficulties, as made it a point of honour not to take a part against her. On individual points, he might indeed interfere and undertake the mediation.

Legge advised that England should immediately take advantage of the moment, before France could gain the king. Peace, however, intervened, which

confirmed Silesia to him. He therefore remained quiet, and would not suffer his hands to be hastily tied. Disputes also arose with England respecting commercial affairs and Silesian debts, so that it was not till the year 1756, that a new uninterrupted diplomatic intercourse recommenced between England and Prussia*.

I shall return, however, to the negotiations between England and Austria. In a dispatch to Robinson, on the 16th of July, 1748†, the duke of Newcastle defends the English policy against the reproaches of Maria Theresa, and says, among other things—"We have spoken only so far for Sardinia and Prussia as justice or necessity demanded." Holland was now so distressed that it could only be saved by accepting the preliminaries of peace.

I hear that the minister Kaunitz has spoken of the non-existence of the barrier treaty. You must speak very seriously on this point with the empress, the queen, and the ministers. "If this reasoning is to take place, they will consider how far it will carry them, namely, to nothing less than the dissolution of the whole alliance. On this account, Austria must declare to England and Holland that the barrier treaty does exist, and that the terms and conditions of it shall be complied with.

"The king of Prussia," continues the duke of Newcastle, "had professed a disposition to enter

* From 1748 to 1756 there are no dispatches from Berlin in the State-paper Office, except some unimportant notices, inserted among other papers. Legge was recalled in November, 1748. According to Prussian accounts, Williams, who was probably at Dresden, was likewise engaged in Berlin, from July, 1750, to January, 1751. Mitchell did not arrive there till April, 1756.

† Austria, vol. clxxiv.

into the strictest alliance with the maritime powers; on which it was said to him, he would see the advantage and necessity of joining with the allies also; that the king of England was firmly determined to support the old system; that if the king of Prussia would concur in it, he would find his advantage in it.

"That it was the king of England's interest to support the house of Austria; that therefore the king would be under the greatest difficulty, if the courts of Vienna and Berlin were not also upon a footing of friendship with each other. That the king of Prussia had gained more than any prince in Europe, and that this would be the best security for his acquisitions. But that it was but just, if he expected the queen's confirmation of the cession in his favour, and the guarantee of the rest of the powers for them, that his majesty should also guarantee the Pragmatic Sanction in its full extent. (The cessions only to be excepted which have been made by the queen.)

"The king of Prussia will confine his guarantee to the queen's German dominions and the Low Countries; but at the same time it is expressly said that he will defend her dominions against any attempt from France. The great point will be, to put his Prussian majesty's sincerity on the proof, and not be too credulous on the one hand and too negligent on the other."

Ten days after, on the 26th of July, 1748, the duke of Newcastle writes to Lord Sandwich in Holland *:—"You know the aversion the Czarina has to

* State-paper Office, Holland, vol. ccxxi.

anything that relates to the king of Prussia; how extremely offended she was, and is, with the article inserted in the preliminaries for the guarantee of Silesia and Glatz. And if the king of Prussia is invited to accede, and the Czarina not, it would not only make her fly out, but use all her influence and credit at Vienna (which are very great) to create new difficulties in our future progress.

"Mr. Legge arrived here on Wednesday last from Berlin. I am sorry to say he did not bring any very satisfactory account of the king of Prussia's present disposition, or any explicit declaration of his sentiments. On the contrary, when Mr. Legge represented to the king of Prussia (agreeably to the manner in which he had always talked to him) the advantages of his coming to an agreement with the king's allies, as well as with the maritime powers, the king of Prussia answered in general terms, that that was a new point which deserved to be considered. And upon the whole Mr. Legge thinks that it is far from being impossible that the king of Prussia may still come in; yet in Mr. Legge's last audience the king of Prussia seemed rather desirous to put an end to the conversation, than to come to any clear explanation of his intentions, or to make direct proposals of any kind whatever.

"Mr. Legge, however, is of opinion that nothing can be more just or so proper to discover the king of Prussia's real views, and indeed to promote the union, upon the only foot that it can be practicable, as the inserting in the definitive treaty a general article, whereby the king of Prussia will see upon what terms he may have the benefit of this treaty,

and the guarantee of the contracting powers for Silesia and Glatz*; namely, on his giving the reciprocal guarantee for what is stipulated in favour of the contracting parties, which Mr. Legge thinks he may not ultimately refuse to comply with; and indeed, if he does, it will be a great indication that his Prussian majesty meant nothing by all his overtures but to divide the maritime powers from the rest of their allies, and to substitute himself in the place of those allies."

Contrary to the wish of England, Austria still procrastinated concluding the peace†. In a letter of the duke of Newcastle, addressed to Keith, in Vienna, he complains of the peevishness, discontentedness, and ill-humour of the Vienna court. On this account Keith sought and obtained an audience, of which he gives an account in a dispatch of the 27th of September. "The emperor told me," he writes, "he believed nobody would say that they had not been very faithful to all their engagements with regard to us. He considered England and Austria to be married together, and consequently that their interest was inseparable, and that he piqued himself to be very national with respect to England."

The empress felt much more hurt than the emperor; she avoided every audience and every conversation with Keith, and England was still considered at Vienna to be partial, especially for the king of Sardinia.

* State-paper Office, vol. ccxxii. Letter of 3rd October.

† State-paper Office, Austria, vol. clxxv. Dispatch of Keith, 15th September, 1748.

However, the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle was concluded on the 18th October, 1748, and the duke of Newcastle wrote to Keith on the 6th December:—"All possible means must be used to cure the court of Vienna of their unjust and groundless jealousy and suspicion, and to bring them into a right way of thinking and acting with respect to their best friends and allies."

In a dispatch of the following day (7th December) Keith writes:—"The Prussian minister at Vienna, Mr. Von Podewils, has applied to me, requesting that I would use my good offices to keep up a good understanding between his court and Vienna; especially as he was very well apprised of his sovereign's friendly dispositions in that respect. That the king his master had at his audience of leave explained himself strongly and clearly on that subject, and that by the reception he had met here from the ministers, he had reason to think they were equally well disposed."

To this the duke of Newcastle answered on the 20th December:—"I am rejoiced at the disposition and conduct of the court of Vienna. The declaration which Mr. Von Podewils made to you of the king his master's present good dispositions, is undoubtedly owing to the firmness which his majesty (the king of England) has showed in abiding by his old allies; and in not complying with the unreasonable and captious demands of the king of Prussia*; and at the same time to the care which the king of England has taken not to give his Prussian majesty

* They are not more particularly pointed out.

any just cause of complaint, by a backwardness in the execution of the engagements contracted with him; provided his Prussian majesty executes with the same exactness all his engagements to his majesty and his allies; and a continuance of the same firm and prudent conduct towards the king of Prussia will be the most effectual means of preventing him from engaging in any measures that may endanger the public tranquillity."

It is much to be regretted that the dispatches of the ambassadors seldom touch on the internal affairs of states, and that when they happen to make an exception, the truth of what they communicate requires to be very strictly scrutinized. These dispatches are filled, in the years of peace in particular, almost entirely with matters which lose all their importance in the course of time, and only such parts as have a reference to greater events and prepare the way for them, deserve mention. Before I do this, for the period that elapsed from the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle to the bursting out of the Seven Years' War, I must go back for some particulars respecting Maria Theresa and Frederick.

In the spring of 1745, the Jews were commanded to quit the Austrian dominions within six months. "All the remonstrances of the ministers," writes the English ambassador*, "were in vain, and Maria Theresa answered, 'she should take it for granted that their intercession arose from self-interest and for Jewish money.' The endeavours of the grand duke and of Prince Charles were equally unsuccessful. There is no accounting for this singular affair, but

* State-paper Office, Austria, vol. clxi. Dispatch of 27th March.

by imputing it to some rash vow, or at least to some very early insurmountable prejudice in the course of her education. Her aversion to the sight of a Jew was too great to be concealed; when at Presburg, she could not pass from the town to her palace but through the very street that was thronged by that people." Not only England, but the Elector of Mayence, the king of Poland, and other princes, nay, even the Pope, interceded for the Jews. England interceded in like manner for the Protestants, who were persecuted in Hungary*.

There was no ground for similar remonstrances to Frederick II. On the other hand, his mode of life was most strictly watched, and great suspicions were entertained of his orthodoxy. On the 12th January, 1745, the English plenipotentiary Laurence writes from Berlin †:—"The king supped, on the 6th, at Count Rothenburg's, with the Opera-dancer, Barbarini, and some other persons of that stamp. He affects an air of cheerfulness and satisfaction, and does nothing but sing and laugh. However, those who are obliged to see him in private are loud in their complaints of his ill-humour. At present he does not know what to do, nor how to extricate himself from the bad condition to which he has brought himself. Count Rothenburg is mortally hated by everybody here ‡, yet he continues to be his master's favourite and spy. It is said that Barbarini, having captivated the king, has not only accepted a new engagement for three years, but, supping very often

* State-paper Office, Austria, vol. clxvii. Letter of Lord Hunnington of 15th September, 1746.

† Prussia, vol. lxiv.

‡ Prussia. Dispatch of 26th January.

at Count Rothenburg's, she has obtained permission to take a journey to Italy.*

"Count Rothenburg (dispatch of the 22nd of January, 1746) continues still a favourite of his majesty, and is always, as it is called in French? at the *parties fines*, composed of the dancing women Barbarini, Madame Brand, and the widowed countess Truchsess†."

The king's health was considered to be feeble; and it was generally believed that he would die early. In the dispatches of February, 1747, it is said, "He has often colic, pains in the kidneys, obstructions on the liver, and twice attacks of apoplexy‡. He plays the flute, contrary to the advice of his physicians; drinks freely of champagne, and takes no care of his health. If he were to die soon, the common cause would gain, for the Crown Prince mortally hates the French."

CHAPTER XXI.

Troubles in Holland—Riots in Gröningen, in Friesland, Leyden, the Hague, Amsterdam, and Haarlem—The Oligarchy—The Populace—Bad management of the Finances.

It is frequently intimated in the dispatches, that a speedy conclusion of the peace was absolutely necessary for the United Netherlands. The following statements confirm the truth of this cessation.

* Dispatch of 9th March. If Barbarini obtained permission to go to Italy, her captivating the king was of little importance.

† Prussia, vol. lxv.

‡ Dispatches of the 1st, 21st, and 28th February.

Oppressive taxes, and the arrogance of the aristocracy in the cities, excited the greatest dissatisfaction, especially among the common people; the latter hoped to gain by strengthening the power of the Stadtholder, whose friends perhaps too little disdained an alliance with the discontented, or hoped in the end to profit by the troubles.

On the 22nd of March, 1748, (writes the English plenipotentiary Dayrolly*) "the day they received at Gröningen the news of her royal highness's happy delivery of a prince, upon some pretence or other the magistrates would not suffer the colours to be displayed, or the bells to be rung, which so enraged the mob, that they went to the chief burgomaster's house, pillaged and destroyed every thing that came in their way, and were going to do the same by several others, when they were informed that the magistrates, who had assembled in a hurry in the town-house, seeing the disposition of the mob, had unanimously agreed to settle the succession to the Stadtholdership on the same footing as in Holland." But Gröningen will however (dispatch of the 26th of March) limit the succession to male heirs only, and retain the appointment to offices.

"In the country about Gröningen" (dispatch of the 9th of April) "some boors were grown very riotous, so that the States have been obliged to send a detachment of horse to disperse them; but the expedition was unsuccessful; the boors having found means to disarm the troopers, which has greatly raised their insolence.

"In Gröningen the mob having been informed

* Holland, vol. ccxxxii.

that M. Giersma, the burgomaster, had desired the States to indemnify him for the damages done at his house in the last riots, they had assembled directly, and proceeded to his house in the country, where they had committed all manner of disorders, notwithstanding the States had refused him his request, though by the small majority of three votes."

"The prince of Orange" (dispatch of the 4th of July) "thinks of restoring order in Gröningen, but will now have something to do in Friezland; where the boors of several districts are now assembled in a tumultuous manner, and threaten their magistrates with destruction, unless they consent to grant the Stadtholder the same prerogatives and the same extent of power with which his highness has been invested by the other six provinces. The States of Friezland have applied to the prince of Orange for regular troops to disperse the rioters, and protect them against the insults of the people."

"Friezland boors" (dispatch of the 8th of June) "have committed great excesses; all houses belonging to the farmers of the taxes have been plundered, and laid level with the ground. And numbers of houses belonging to the grietmen* and other gentlemen, who are thought to be averse to any alteration in the government, have been reduced to ashes. A considerable number of grietmen have since assembled, and deliberated about extending the prerogatives and hereditary rights of the Stadtholder."

"About 700 boors" (dispatch of 11th June), "from all the different villages of Friezland, contrived, with their boats, to get into the town of Leuwarden, and,

* Grietmänner; this word means bailiffs.

as soon as the States had opened their assembly, they sent eight deputies to them, to desire they would redress their grievances, and consent to a number of proposals, which they submitted to their consideration. The chief of which related to the succession of the female line; the additional power to be granted to the Stadtholder; and the abolition of several taxes. It was now too late for the States to offer any resistance, and, in compliance with what was required of them, they came to several resolutions, which were immediately sent to the prince of Orange by four of their deputies. In Overyssel and Gröningen, also, the houses of some tax-collectors have been destroyed, and demands for the abolition of some taxes made."

"The prince of Orange and the States General" (dispatch of 14th June) "have, however, declared, that the taxes could not be spared and abolished at once; that all should wait for legal resolutions; and the disturbers of the public peace be punished."

"Meantime Friezland and Gröningen" (dispatch of 18th June) "are in a state of complete anarchy. There the boors succeeded in getting twelve of their deputies admitted to the assembly of the States, and this has been imitated in other places. At the Hague the rioters had a meeting, and intended to pull down the tax-gatherers' houses, threatening, likewise, destruction to the Grand Pensionary, and the Fiscal Van Wesel, as those who promoted these taxes, in order to divide with the farmers the spoils of the people. Armed citizens, however, hindered the execution of this plan. At Haarlem the riot was not so easily appeased, though general Grobestein was sent thither by the prince of Orange to

exhort the people, in his highness's name, to keep quiet. His presence, however, could not prevent them from demolishing all the houses of the farmers of the taxes, throwing the sacks full of money into the canals, burning their papers, and committing several disorders, in which some people even lost their lives; and the rioters could not be prevailed upon to disperse till the magistrates had agreed to suspend the payment of the taxes, till they were promised that the prince of Orange would consider their grievances, and see them redressed. As soon as the magistrates had perceived the evil intentions of the people, they assembled immediately the bourgeoisie, and desired to know whether they would stand by them, and protect them against the insults of the mob? They answered, very readily, they would, as far as it concerned the stadthouse, their persons and property; but that they would not meddle in anything that concerned the farmers of the taxes.

"On the 17th June the mob was up at Leyden and very busy last night in pulling down houses* All these notions must bring the prince of Orange to the dilemma of doing what the people desire; or in punishing thus to the utmost extent of the placards, which are, indeed, now become so common, that they are not minded as they were at first. Many are angry that, since 1679, nothing has been done towards improving the finances, and, if the taxes are now not punctually paid, the farmers are naturally obliged to make reductions. The disorders of the

* State-paper Office, France, vol. xcvi. Wolter's dispatch of the 18th and 25th June, 1748.

populace are very justly censured; but, without doubt, measures ought to have been taken for removing the prevailing abuses. If the authorities will do nothing, it is resolved that the prince shall be made Count of Holland. If he then, also, does nothing, they will depose him, as they have before raised him.

"Last Tuesday, towards the evening, the rioters assembled in the Hague in greater numbers than the day before; forced all the avenues that were guarded by the burghers, and proceeded directly to the chief farmer of the taxes' house, which they plundered of every individual thing that was in it*. Several fresh detachments of the burghers were immediately sent to disperse the mob, with orders to fire upon them, if they could not effect it otherwise. They soon perceived that they had no other method left but to come to this last extremity, as the rioters (who were provided with stones, and even with some fire-arms) were determined, at any rate, to carry their point; they even began the attack against the burghers, who soon took to their heels after firing a volley, which, instead of being directed against the rioters, was unfortunately fired among a parcel of innocent people, whose curiosity had led them thither. By this accident seven or eight persons were killed on the spot, besides those who were wounded, to the number of about twenty-five or thirty. As soon as it was perceived that the mob had got the better of the burghers, a detachment of the Swiss guards was ordered to disperse the rioters, who, upon their first appearance, immediately ran away. But, being in-

* Holland, vol. ccxxxii. Dispatch of Dayrollys of 22nd June.

formed the next morning that the guards had no orders to fire upon them, they assembled again, determined to vent their rage upon the houses of all the other farmers of the taxes. The magistrates of the Hague sent, upon this, for the officers of the bourgeoisie, to exhort them to do their duty, and to put an end to all these disturbances; but they answered, their men were resolved they would have nothing more to do with it, as long as it concerned only the farmers of the taxes; but they would take care no harm should be done to any body else. The mob being now at liberty to do whatever they pleased, employed the whole day in pillaging the houses of the farmers of the taxes, and doing, unmolested, all the mischief they could think of; but their fury fell only upon these farmers of the public revenues." All were, therefore, forced to assist in strengthening the power of the prince of Orange, and the disaffected States were obliged to offer their assistance."

A second dispatch of Keith of the same day (the 22d June)* confirms the account given by Dayrollys of the riots in the Hague. "The mob sent a message to a lady, Madame Stuart, who happened to live in a house that belonged to a farmer of the taxes, to desire her to remove immediately, and carry all her goods away, as they were resolved to demolish the house forthwith, which they accordingly did soon after. The same day they gave a safeguard to a farmer of the taxes, who was so fortunate as to be in the good graces of the mob. During all that time they meddled with none but the farmer of the taxes' houses; but on Thursday they began to

* Holland, vol. ccxxxiii.

threaten some other persons who happened to be related to, or connected with, them.

"No earnest measures to support the power of the magistrates have been taken, and that the people have been quiet since yesterday in the afternoon, I attribute it rather to their being weary, than to any measures that have been taken to put a stop to their insolence; though nothing was so easy, as the mob was composed of women and children, so that an hundred men of the regular troops, with proper orders, would at any time have been sufficient to put an end to the sedition. There was, indeed, an unlucky circumstance in this affair: the prince of Orange's indisposition, which hindered him to act himself, and put a timely stop to the affair."

The prince proposed to the States of Holland the abolition of the farming of the taxes, especially the taxes on consumption*. All the States consented, with the exception of Amsterdam. Neither is it resolved how the deficiency which will occur in the revenue is to be supplied. The prince has also proposed changes in appointing officers to public situations, and in the appropriation of the revenues of the Post Office, where great partiality and monopoly have hitherto existed; public offices have, contrary to oath, been sold; there is no control against the oligarchical magistrates and the prejudicial influence of families; a girl of nine years of age was appointed to the office of midwife to the town; and similar instances might be multiplied.

Hitherto all has been quiet at Amsterdam, and

* Dispatch of Wolters of 28th June. France, vol. xcvi.

it was hoped that the new measures of the government, respecting the changes in the system of taxation, would amply satisfy them*. "But last Monday evening the riot had begun in Amsterdam with so much violence, that the houses of upwards of twenty farmers of the taxes had been demolished; and that the mob had carried their insolence so far as even to pull down one of the houses opposite the Stadthouse, and under the very eyes of their magistrates who were there assembled upon that occasion." At last, firing was resorted to, by which about twelve persons were killed. The burghers, however, are as much enraged with the farmers of the taxes as the mob. In the general panic which prevailed, and on the proposition of the prince of Orange, a change in the farming system, and a reduction in the taxes of Amsterdam, was also determined upon. The same was done at Utrecht, to prevent excesses.

In the sequel this lenity did not prevent the adoption of rigorous measures†. In Amsterdam a man and woman, who had put themselves at the head of the rioters, were sentenced to be hanged. The mob attempted to rescue them, and to force some of the avenues where the burghers were posted. The last fired upon them, and killed and wounded between twenty and thirty; but the confusion occasioned thereby was so prodigious, that a considerable number of the spectators were pushed into the neighbouring canals, where, it is said, upwards of forty persons were drowned, besides those who were crushed and trampled to death. Yesterday another

* Dispatch of Dayrollys of 29th June. Holland, vol. ccxxxii.
† His dispatch of 2nd July.

ringleader, who was accompanied by a strong escort, was hung without any disturbance. The financial embarrassments increase, as there are no means to make good the deficiency. Most of the old magistrates are adverse to the prince of Orange*. The magistrates of Amsterdam endeavour to prove their rights†. (The question, however, at that time, was not so much respecting literal rights as the due application of them.)

"In Friezland the people‡, who have intruded themselves into the government of that province, are running such lengths, that they appear to be rather the effects of madness, than of their inclination to reform, in this rebellious manner, the abuses they complain of. They have increased to 160 the seventy-two articles to which they have lately compelled the States to give their consent. They have likewise seized upon the arsenal and powder-magazine at Leuwarden, and declare that they will support the measures they have taken, and defend them to the last extremity, in case any attempt should be made to reduce them by force. If troops should approach, they will pierce the dikes, and perish with their wives and children, rather than submit to the old form of government.

"The insurrection at Leyden was come, last Thursday, to such a pitch §, that some of the mob went armed to the town-hall to make new demands of the magistrates; threatening to be the death of them, if they did not submit that night. And the

* Dispatch of 13th July. Holland, vol. ccxxxiii.
† Wolter's dispatch of 23rd July. France, vol. xcvi.
‡ Dispatch of 30th July. Holland, vol. ccxxxiv.
§ Dispatch of Wolter, 9th August. France, vol. xcvi.

following day, the mob threatened to pull down the houses of some of the magistrates, even of those that the prince of Orange had thought proper to continue. Troops have been sent to the town, and some of the ringleaders thrown into prison.

"In many places the people demand the deposition of the town magistrates*, who are weak, disunited, and embarrassed for want of money.

"The prince of Orange has received a commission † from the States of Holland, to reconcile the citizens and the magistrates of Amsterdam; and to change the latter if necessary. He was received with much festivity by the citizens. The estates resolved, indeed, to continue the old taxes, but, in future, to have them levied by civil officers, and to abolish certain exemptions‡. The farmers had hitherto been used very much to favour the members of the magistracy.

Gröningen awarded not so much to the prince of Orange as Friezland; the boors, displeased with this, a few days ago invested the house where the States were assembled, and obliged them to conform, in every respect, with Friezland, as far as may concern the authority of the Stadtholder§. But, before this resolution was taken, Mr. Leeuwe Von Aduwart, one of the most considerable members of the States, was in the utmost danger of his life; for, at the time he was stepping out of his coach, he was knocked down, and trampled almost to death, before he could be assisted; then it was with the utmost difficulty

* Sander's dispatch of 11th August. Holland, vol. ccxxv.
† Wolter's dispatch of 28th August. France, vol. xcvi.
‡ Dispatches of 21st June and 26th August. Holland, vol. ccxxxv.
§ Dispatch of 7th September, vol. ccxxxii.

that he escaped the rage of the people, by saving himself over the roofs of the houses.

"The prince of Orange has changed the burgomasters, and part of the town council, in Amsterdam*. Since then, the demands for the removal of old judges; for filling up the officers' places, &c., have increased. The prince endeavoured to settle everything equitably, but could not please anybody On the 9th, in the afternoon, Gemmirk, one of the burgher deputation†, that was one of the chief people that brought about the change of the magistrates, and who had hitherto been in great credit with the people, having, in the burgher assembly, reported that he had not received a favourable answer from the Stadtholder to the message which he was sent with, which was to have his highness's approbation to choose a city council of war entirely independent of the magistrates, he was abused in the most terrible manner by the assembly, more particularly as he had been one of those that had proposed the naming some of the magistrates that were chosen at their recommendation, and also by the officers of the burghers. Things went so far that Gemmirk and his friends were in danger of their lives. And, as an instance of what the aspersions against them were, I can only say that next day they printed a justification, in which they declared that they never had, either with his highness or any of his courtiers, any conference that tended to the giving up the privileges of the city, and to selling the liberties of their fellow-citizens.

"These deputies being turned out, others were

* Dispatch of 10th September, vol. ccxxxii.

† Wolter's dispatch of 13th September. France, vol. xcvi.

immediately chosen. The new deputies were sent to the Prince-stadtholder with a message from the assembly, to desire leave to choose a free council of war, in which all the officers, from the colonel down to the ensign, should be chosen by the burghers. The prince answered, that he could absolutely not grant their request, adding the strongest arguments that could be for this his refusal, as the unlawfulness, absurdity, and inconstancy of a council of war entirely independent of the magistrates. With this answer the burghers went back to the assembly, where it was very ill-received: insomuch that, on the 10th, at three in the morning, the burghers returned in numbers to the house where the prince lodges. Count Bentinck and others appeared to receive their message, but none of the reasons that were given them, for not disturbing his highness at that time, were of any effect, and the prince was obliged to admit three of them into his bed-chamber; and the request was put to his highness in much stronger terms than the day before. To which the prince, moved at their unreasonable obstinacy, answered as before, that he would rather leave the city that instant, than do anything against his conscience. Upon which the deputies gave the prince to understand, that the burghers would not suffer him to stir out of the city, till everything was regulated to the full satisfaction of the citizens, and that 6000 were within call, to keep the gates and booms of the city.

"The prince, finding it impossible to withhold the intent of this frantic mob, granted their request, which, the next morning, was ratified by publication. Tranquillity was not, however, yet restored; fresh misunderstandings and demands arose,

till the prince caused the greater part of the council to be chosen anew and confirmed. Some said, that all originated with the prince's enemies; others, that his friends had continued it, in order to carry matters to extremity, and attain certain objects.

"Upon the first appearance of new tumults at Haarlem, fifty dragoons were sent thither*; but, for some reason or other, the magistrates dismissed them very soon. Immediately after their departure, the mob rose, shut the gates of the town, where they kept guard, and assembled to a very great number in the market-place, besieging the magistrates in the town-house, and making very extravagant demands, amounting in effect to a resolution of paying no taxes at all. The prince, upon this notice, ordered General Cornabi, with a strong detachment of Dutch and Swiss guards, and some cavalry, to march to Haarlem, to support the collectors in the execution of their office. The general found the gate shut, which having ordered his men to force open, the burghers fired at them, and wounded one serjeant. The soldiers then were ordered to return the fire, which immediately drove the mob from the post; the gate was soon forced open, and the troops marched up to the market-place, where another skirmish ensued, and another four or five burghers being killed, and ten or twelve wounded, the rest took to their heels.

"The same day a deputation came from Haarlem to the prince, demanding the abolition of all the taxes, with many other ridiculous proposals. But the prince, instead of giving any answer to such

* Dispatch of 6th January, 1750, Holland, vol. ccxxxvii.

absurdities, committed the deputies, who were eight in number, to prison. Several of the ringleaders are taken, and the prince seems resolved to be vigorous in the punishment of these offenders; and a strict inquiry will be made into the condition of the magistrates, which I hope will have a good effect in the other towns."

The preceding communications prove: —

First, That Holland, during such great dangers at home, was certainly unable any longer to bear the burthen of a foreign war.

Secondly, That farming the public revenues excites much more discontent, and is accompanied with greater oppression, than collecting them by officers.

Thirdly, That the United Netherlands had not done enough, in the eighteenth century, to regulate their finances.

Fourthly, That the pretended republican government was, in many respects, oligarchical and selfish.

Fifthly, That, when the government does not introduce reasonable reforms at the right time, the mob has recourse to unreasonable revolutionary measures, and, in fact, neither party can be acquitted of all blame.

CHAPTER XXII.

Upon the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle—Relations of the European powers, England, France, Prussia, Austria — Contest in America — —Declarations of England and Austria upon and against Frederick II.—Lord Marshal—English Commercial Laws—Silesian Debts—The Barrier Treaty—Austria and Spain—Kaunitz—Feeling in Paris—France defends Frederick II.—Election of the King of the Romans—Disputes respecting the Palatinate—Misunderstandings between England and Austria, and between England and Prussia—Hostility of England and Austria to Prussia—European Policy.

FREDERICK II. justly affirms*, "that the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle had by no means done away with all the points in dispute, and still less with all suspicion. The last was especially directed against himself, and even those powers endeavoured to calumniate him, to isolate him, and to represent him as extremely dangerous, who were by no means interested in so doing." What we must consider as natural in Austria, appears in Russia to be mere passion, and in England, mere prejudice. In the years 1749 to 1755, we find only fruitless, frequently contradictory, arguings backwards and forwards. It is not till the last year, that the negotiations acquire a more decided tendency, and lead to deeds.

I subjoin, first, extracts from the dispatches of the earlier years.

In January, 1749, the English colonel, Yorke, was sent to Paris. He writes:—"M. de Puysieux †

* Œuvres Posthumes, iii. 39.

† Dispatch of 1st March. State-paper Office, France, vol. xcvii.

said to me, if any ally the king of France had, and he would particularly name to me the king of Prussia, should, on any account, endeavour to engage them to take part in recommencing the war, they would not only give him a flat denial, but do something more, and be the first to put a stop to it, in a manner worthy of themselves. War and peace in Europe depend on France and England.

"Yorke observed*, that the king of Prussia was a schemer, *un homme à projets;* to which Puysieux answered, that France did not enter into all his plans, and Frederick would probably be willing to reduce his army, if Austria did the same. On the 12th of April, M. de Puysieux † repeated what he had said about Prussia, and added, France was ready to make common cause against Frederick II., not only with England, but also with Austria, in case Frederick should attack it. That this had also been intimated to the king of Poland. About the same time, Bartenstein had already conceived the notion of uniting Austria with France against Prussia‡ which the duke of Newcastle, however, declared to be quite chimerical. Even at the beginning of August, the French minister§ declared, that France knew Frederick was ready to catch at any opportunity to extend his power and dominion; but they were on their guard, and would keep him in check."

About the same time, Lord Albemarle went to Paris, and the negotiations respecting Tobago, the West Indies, and Acadia‖, gradually took such a

* Dispatch of 29th March. † Dispatch of 12th April.
‡ Dispatch of 3rd March, Austria, vol. clxxvi.
§ Dispatch of 4th August, from Paris, vol. xcvii.
‖ France, vol. xcviii., August, 1749.

turn as changed the ideas of the court of Versailles respecting Prussia.

At Vienna, the Austrian ministers complained *, that the Prussian ambassador, Von Podewils, sent unfavourable accounts to Berlin, and represented everything in the worst light; while Maria Theresa declared she would forget what was past, and live in peace with all her neighbours, especially with Prussia. Marshal Saxe, while he was at Dresden, went to Count Sternberg, the Austrian ambassador, and told him †, he could not conceive how the court of Vienna could entertain any jealousy against the king of Prussia. That it was certain that prince was quite satisfied with the acquisitions he has made, and with the situation he was in, and had laid aside all ambitious thoughts, in order to indulge his natural taste for the sciences and building. Austria might disarm; Prussia would do the same. These mutual polite assurances did not, however, lead to any wholesome resolutions, and even the course of verbal and written negotiations relaxed and ceased.

It was not till the 17th of October, 1730, that the duke of Newcastle wrote to Lord Albemarle at Paris ‡:—"Baron Vorster, the imperial minister here, did inform me, that Count Kaunitz had the strongest orders from his court to act in concert with you, in everything that concerned the general affairs

* Dispatches from Vienna of 19th March and 24th July, vol. clxxvi. On the 27th June the Duke of Newcastle writes to Keith, that Prussia had concluded a treaty with the Turks, and that he was to confide this secret to the emperor alone.

† Dispatch of 2nd August, Austria, vol. clxxvii.

‡ State-paper Office, France, vol. c.

of Europe. His majesty has great confidence in Kaunitz's ability and good intentions, of which he has given most signal proofs in our late transactions at Vienna. You are to act in the most perfect concert with him."

In March, 1751, the court of Vienna made a kind of general declaration * respecting its views of the affairs of Europe:—Austria is ready to do everything for the maintenance of peace. The French court has acknowledged this truth more than once; but that the false insinuations of the king of Prussia had constantly prevailed there on all occasions †. That the empress-queen would always fulfil the engagements she had contracted with her allies; but that they were purely defensive. That her imperial majesty had reason to be surprised, that, after the many discoveries which the court of France had made, of the falsehoods published by that prince, they should continue to give credit to those he was daily inventing. That at length, after so many proofs, the insinuations, which came from such a quarter, ought not to make any more impression; and that, in order to establish a perfect calm in Europe, it was time, once for all, to lay aside all prejudice. That the empress-queen was disposed to assure that court, even in writing, that she had not contracted any offensive engagements, either against the king of Prussia, or any other power."

With far less occasion, or even without any grounds whatever, either of anger or suspicion, the English declaration against Frederick II. was still

* Dispatch of 4th March, France, vol. cvi.

† Wherein the insinuations consisted, and what Frederick gained by them, is nowhere stated.

more severe than the Austrian; an error which, as we shall afterwards see, was not without pernicious results.

On the 4th of March, 1751, the duke of Bedford writes to Lord Albemarle at Paris*:—"The endeavours of the king of Prussia, for infusing into the French court groundless jealousy and suspicion, against his majesty and his allies, have been so frequently repeated, and with so much rancour and malice," &c.

"The king of Prussia," writes Colonel Yorke, on the 25th of August, 1751†, "gains ground every day in this country, and makes them believe whatever he thinks proper. They have submitted just now to do for him what I much question whether they would have done for any other prince in Europe."

From these words one might believe that Yorke had made a discovery of great political importance; and what then had the French granted? That the Prussian secretary of legation should take upon him, for a time, the functions of an ambassador, till Frederick should appoint the Lord Marshal; respecting which the loudest complaints were again made by England, because he was a Jacobite.

This ill-founded and excessive zeal appears in another dispatch of Yorke's‡, in which he says, "I urged him very strongly upon his Prussian majesty's designs, I endeavoured to show him how uniformly he acted to foment disputes and widen breaches; and how wise use might be made of his discovering his policy so clearly; how weak it was, on every occa-

* France, vol. cvi. † France, vol. cvii.

‡ Dispatch, 15th September, 1751, France, vol. cvii.

sion, to give in to the forgeries of that prince, and to adopt his measures; how dangerous a friend he was; and how artfully he laid his snares to draw in those who would not open their eyes upon his conduct. I desired he (M. Puysieux) would reflect on the secrecy and dispatch with which he had carried on and perfected this affair, which clearly demonstrates the bad designs he had in it."

If Frederick received any accounts of this and similar dispatches, he could not fail to be discontented with England. The affair which Colonel Yorke again brings forward with so much earnestness, can be no other than the nomination of the Lord Marshal to the post of ambassador, by which the king certainly intended nothing hostile to the house of Hanover. For all the other accusations there is no proof whatever: accordingly, M. Puysieux, as Colonel Yorke writes, answered, "He could not but think that we blackened the king of Prussia too much, since he could not believe his intentions were so bad." Nay, the same minister writes three days afterwards *:—"The lord marshal told some Jacobites waiting on him that his orders were not to meddle at all in these affairs."

Even at a later period, when Frederick had reason to complain of the application of the English commercial laws, and to suspend the payment of the Silesian loans, this was no ground for England to act in all Europe against Prussia. We are, therefore, naturally led to the idea, that extreme friendship for Austria, and a preponderating influence of the court of Vienna, had caused this aversion. But England was at that time on no friendly confidential terms

* Dispatch, 18th September.

with Austria, as the following extracts sufficiently prove. Already, in October, 1748, there were differences respecting the Barrier Treaty and other matters, on which occasion the duke of Newcastle writes to Lord Sandwich* :—"I am sorry to find the court of Vienna can do nothing thoroughly with a good grace." In the negotiations respecting the election of a king of the Romans, and the claims of the elector palatine, we find other misunderstandings; and the duke of Newcastle† complains still more loudly of Austria's want of sincerity in the negotiations with Spain. Nay, about the same time that Colonel Yorke in Paris so vehemently abuses Prussia, the duke of Newcastle‡ writes:—"The court of Vienna persist in their unaccountable and abominable reserve and silence, and the constant professions of preference and predilection used at this time by the court of Vienna, makes their behaviour even worse than it would otherwise be."

Soon after, on the 27th of October, 1751, Lord Albemarle complains in Paris of the behaviour of Kaunitz§ :—"I asked him whether he intended to be as reserved to me as he had formerly been. I hoped he would not imitate his court (in regard to the Spanish affairs), whose reserve towards the king was as unaccountable and ill-placed as his majesty's openness was generous, and consistent with the whole tenor of his conduct."

On the 26th of November the duke of Newcastle writes to Keith at Vienna‖ :—"You must insist upon

* Dispatch, 22nd October, 1748, Holland, vol. ccxxii.
† Letter to Keith of 2nd August, 1751, Austria, vol. clxxxii.
‡ Letter of 8th October, 1751. Ibid.
§ France, vol. cvii. ‖ Austria, vol. clxxxii.

it that Austria shall come to an understanding with England and Holland respecting the Barrier Treaty. Upon the principle there can be no dispute. The execution of the treaty from both sides, and the settling everything that relates to the Low Countries upon an amicable footing, is so material, that, till that is done, there will always remain such causes of jealousy and discontent as will not fail to affect that perfect union and harmony which is so necessary between the maritime powers and England.

"Through the reservedness of the court of Vienna, (continues the duke of Newcastle on the 3rd of January, 1752 *), and by their weakness and desiring a separate treaty with Spain, exclusively with (of?) all other powers, the opportunity was lost to separate Spain entirely from France. I am very sorry to observe that all the answers which have been given to any instances (representations) made to the court of Vienna, contain nothing † than strong encomiums of themselves, and of their own good faith, and the religious performance of their engagements, when the subject of their answers has but too often proved the very contrary. They ought to lower the taxes in the Netherlands to the same footing on which they stood previous to the war, and uphold the contracts. The continuance of this conduct will in time, and, perhaps, sooner than is imagined, alienate every true friend of the house of Austria from them; and I am afraid it is too much owing to one false error that the Austrian ministers, in all their replies, study more to make court to their own sovereigns, than really to serve them, by giving

* Austria, vol. clxxxiii.

† Letter of 21st February, 1752. Ibid.

proper attention to the first demands of their allies."

The Austrian answers were polite, but did not bring matters to the point wished for by the maritime powers. The former sought above all things to gain by this opportunity a reasonable treaty of commerce, after which they would maintain the Barrier Treaty.

Thus the course of official negotiations was rather vacillating and tedious than effective and powerful, as will probably be best exemplified if I arrange them in chronological order.

On the 22nd of September, 1751, Albemarle writes from Paris *:—"The king and the royal family went to the church of Notre Dame to be present at the Te Deum in honour of the birth of the duke of Bordeaux. Though the whole town was assembled, and though the government and magistrates had everything they could think of to instil a little spirit of mirth and noise into the people, yet nothing of that appeared. For with all the pains that was taken, Vive le Roi! was hardly heard, and his majesty did not seem at all satisfied with his reception. This circumstance is so different from what is commonly imagined of the reception given to the monarchs in this country, that people will certainly think it was remarkable." But they are extravagant, and make loans in time of peace, live in constant disputes with the clergy, parliament, &c.

"The French minister, Contest, said to me† that England should shake off the prejudices we had

* France, vol. cvii.

† Dispatch of 15th March, 1752, France, vol. cix.

adopted to the disadvantage of that monarch: he was afraid we had suffered ourselves to take impressions against the king of Prussia by the insinuations of some other courts, that were no friends to the present tranquillity. For that he (Contest) knew the sentiments of the king of Prussia were very different from those our unjust jealousies of him made us impute to him, and that he had no greater desire than to see the general repose of Europe fixed on a solid and lasting foundation. I endeavoured to refute this, and to prove that the king's actions did not agree with his words. Contest, however, concluded by saying, he hoped we would one day or other remove our suspicions."

Soon after this the misunderstanding between England and Austria was renewed, respecting the election of Joseph as king of the Romans, and the affairs of the Palatinate. Accordingly, Lord Holderness writes, on the 6th of August, to Lord Albemarle*:—"You may see the weak and unjustifiable part which the court of Vienna has acted both with regard to their own interests, and the attention which they ought to have had to the king of England, who showed himself so active in the affair of the election. The court of Vienna might have obtained the unanimity of the electors, if they would have sacrificed a small sum of money in comparison of the greatness and advantage of the object. And they might, without any hazard, have originally proceeded legally and constitutionally to the election with their eminent majority, if they had not raised groundless difficulties themselves, infused them into

* France, vol. cxiii.

others, and by their backwardness, obstinacy, and delays, caused France and Prussia to threaten such an opposition to it, as makes such a measure at present very unadvisable."

Austria endeavoured to defend itself against these and similar accusations. That it was impossible for them to yield to the arbitrary demands of the Palatinate, which would only have called forth new claims. For the election of the king, Austria was not inclined to sacrifice much, and would rather quietly abide the issue than at present encounter great difficulties.

The duke of Newcastle was as much displeased with Prussia as with Austria; nay, he was even more violent than the court of Vienna itself. Thus, on the 24th of January, 1753, he wrote to Lord Albemarle*:—Prussia frustrates the election of the Roman king, and has only unjust, ambitious, and despotic views. "It is to no purpose either to deny this to be the case, or to prove that it ought not to be so; the fact is evident beyond all contradiction; and if the court of Vienna will not see it in that light, they are more blind to their own interests than I am willing to believe they will be."

In truth, however, all facts and proofs of Frederick's unjust, ambitious, and despotic plans are entirely wanting; for that he took the part of his subjects† when their ships were seized in consequence of the English commercial laws, cannot, by any possibility, be designated a disturbance of the peace of Europe.

* France, vol. cxvi.

† Letter of 13th February, 1753; Austria, vol. clxxxvi.

"If the king of Prussia" (writes the duke of Newcastle, on the 9th of March, 1753, to Vienna.) "takes any steps to break the peace in consequence of the violence already begun against the subjects of the empress-queen *, then the king of England is willing to give a sufficient subsidy to the Prussians, and then only it can be wanted.

"You will submit to her imperial majesty whether it might not be proper that the Austrian troops should be so disposed, as in case of an attack from the king of Prussia on his majesty, a very considerable diversion may be immediately made by the empress-queen's troops."

Austria laid hold on this expression, and offered every assistance compatible with the treaty; nay, Maria Theresa even said †, that her troops should be armed, "not only to defend ourselves if attacked, but might even be a means of preventing Prussia from attempting anything to disturb the peace."

Though these general observations very much corresponded with the earlier expressions made use of England, no further notice was taken of them in London; on which account Austria also drew back, and acted as if the thought had originated with England. Courtesy, however, was not wanting; and on the 12th of December, Kaunitz wrote from Vienna to Lord Albemarle ‡, "Count Stahrenberg has orders to behave towards you with cordiality, which, from the happy and complete harmony between our two courts, cannot fail to be advantageous to business.

* Letter of the 13th February, 1753, Austria, vol. clxxxvi. What acts of violence is not said.

† Dispatch of 14th August, 1753. ‡ France, vol. cxviii.

Kaunitz also speaks of the pernicious endeavours of the French for universal dominion, and of the necessity of opposing them by every possible means*."

This was particularly welcome to the English, as the misunderstanding between them and the French respecting America daily increased. Each party endeavoured to lay the blame on the other, and spoke of a wish for peace, while both prepared for war.

From the confusion of diplomacy, two entirely opposite views gradually arose from the force of circumstances; namely, that of England to unite all Europe against France; and that of Austria to unite all Europe against Prussia. For some time these two objects seemed to harmonize; soon, however, their incompatibility was manifest, and the question rose who was to conquer the other in negotiations. Austria, without doubt, obtained its object both in France and Prussia, and brought Frederick to those measures and conclusions on which opinions are to the present day divided. My further communications will very much tend to correct and throw some light upon these opinions. I must, however, proceed very gradually, as the diplomatic correspondence is much fuller. and also more intricate. from this period.

* Dispatch from Vienna of 23rd August, 1754, Austria, vol. clxxxix.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Situation of the powers—Russia—Misunderstandings between England and Austria—Difference of their last plans—English negotiations in St. Petersburg—The court—Favourites—Fêtes—Extravagances—Want of money—Increasing disputes respecting America—English and Austrian policy—Declarations of Count Kaunitz—Active measures against Prussia—Bestucheff—Woronzow—Intrigues in Russia—The empress Elizabeth's answer to France and Prussia—Venality and want of money in Russia—Treaty between Russia and England—Catherine—Peter.

The nearer we come to the great war which was so important in the history of the world, not merely on account of its duration, but, above all, from the manner in which it was carried on, and which became for Frederick II. and Prussia a monument of eternal glory, the more numerous are the questions that present themselves, and deserve to be thoroughly investigated and answered. For instance; in case of a maritime war between England and France, were the powers able and willing to preserve peace on the Continent? In particular, was the maintenance of peace or the recovery of Silesia the main object of the policy of Austria? Could the neutrality of Russia be reasonably depended upon or not? What power had the most reason to reckon on its support? Had Frederick II. sufficient grounds for war or not? Must his attack on Austria be designated as self-defence, an error, or unjust desire of conquest?

I propose these questions, not with the view of answering them in such or such a manner by detailed arguments, but because I wish the reader to

bear them in mind, that he may the more easily answer them himself from the following communications.

As early as May, 1754, Count Kaunitz warmly urged that England should bring about its new treaty with Russia*. Austria undoubtedly thought to take advantage of it for itself against Prussia, and calculated more correctly than the British ministry. "Count Kaunitz," continues the English ambassador, "mentioned another circumstance; viz., that the Czarina had likewise required that the empress queen should assemble a considerable body of troops upon the frontiers that lay next to the Prussian dominions, to which her imperial majesty has given for answer, that she was so happy as to have prevented the wishes of the empress of Russia on that point; for that her troops had been for a great while past disposed in such a manner, that she could, in a very little time, assemble a very considerable army anywhere upon the frontiers of Prussia that might be thought proper, and that she had made this disposition in consequence of the obligation she had entered into with the empress of Russia, in the fourth secret article of their treaty.

"Count Kaunitz said that they had chosen to mention the obligation of the said secret article, to let the court of Russia thereby understand that the Czarina was, by a *former engagement*, obliged to leave the body of troops in Livonia which she now had there, about which she made so great a noise, and for which she demanded so great a sum of money."

Notwithstanding their apparently-similar measures and objects, Austria and the maritime powers

* Austria, vol. clxxxviii. Dispatch from Vienna, 26th May, 1764.

already cherished opposite views, and new misunderstandings arose from the continued disputes about the Barrier Treaty. Lord Holderness wrote on this subject to Mr. Keith at Vienna, on the 7th of January, 1755*:—"If any one could suspect the imperial ministers of being false enough in all their former professions of attachment to the present system of Europe, and to the union of the court of Vienna with the maritime powers, or to be weak enough to suppose that the house of Austria can maintain itself upon any other plan†, one might be apt to believe they had made use of the low artifice to separate the maritime powers in a question in which they are mutually interested, by privately offering to one what was kept hid from the other, without, however, any serious intentions of performing it at all.

"The king of England will make one more last *tentative* to preserve that system which is in such imminent danger of being dissolved by the false policy, injustice, and ingratitude of the court of Vienna.

"You cannot but know how many people there are in the Netherlands who think an alliance with the king of Prussia preferable to that with the house of Austria; and the present conduct of the court of Vienna will make it impracticable for any ministry in Holland to oppose the torrent."

"I know not," continues Holderness on the 14th of February, 1755‡, "where I shall begin to lament the misguided and ungrateful counsels which the court of Vienna have so fatally pursued since the

* Austria, vol. cxc.

† This is probably in allusion to the alliance with France, which was still thought to be impossible.

‡ Austria, vol. cxc.

peace of Aix-la-Chapelle; the coldness and reserve they have shown to his majesty upon all occasions; the little concert their ministers in foreign courts have acted with towards those employed by his majesty; the caution, and almost diffidence, with which they have entered, even into such measures as were solely calculated for their interest; and their total silence upon the several attempts which have been made to form a defensive system; but, above all, their unjustifiable conduct upon the subject of the Barrier Treaty, have necessarily forced his majesty (of England) of late to unusual reserve and secrecy on his part.

"Kaunitz has found it, and ever will find it, impracticable to carry so vain a project into execution. Nor is there a power in Europe who will enter into any measures with the house of Austria that are not supported by the king of England's weight and influence; a thorough knowledge that without the king's assistance the engagements of the court of Vienna must be ineffectual."

Here already we are induced to make some observations. England and Holland regarded the Barrier Treaty as unalterable and lasting, while, on the contrary, Austria imagined that some of the conditions which bore hard upon it might in time be altered. This was the more natural, as England required the aid of Austria in the furtherance of its own plans. The disputes with America lay entirely without the circle of their own interests, and if a continental war was inevitable, it must have been the wish of Austria that it should be against Prussia. It was impossible either to seek or to bring about a war with France. If Austria spoke of the maintenance

of the old system of Europe, it thought, at least internally, of its condition before 1740, while England thought of its condition after 1748. Now if England and Austria remained on one side, while France and Prussia took the other, this equipoise appeared to promise no advantage to either, and the issue seemed to depend on the resolutions of Russia. Accordingly, the diplomatists at this arbitrary court were more than usually occupied, as the following dispatches prove.

"The Russian senate" (writes Williams on the 15th of January, 1755*) "has resolved, with respect to the king of Prussia's present situation and his future views, and they have unanimously thought that he was already become too great, and that the least further accession to his power was highly dangerous to the interests of Russia: 60,000 recruits have been levied."

At the same time Williams negotiated with Brühl on the renewal of the contract for subsidies†. The latter denies having anywhere, or in any manner, furthered the interests of France and Prussia. Williams, however, speaks of "the avarice, vanity, and ambition of Brühl."

Bestucheff complains, in a note, that England will not pay Russia enough subsidies‡, while they had collected an army of 60,000 men, which, without any assistance, was to make a diversion against the king of Prussia by attacking his dominions by land, while a fleet should do the same by sea, and that for this

* State-paper Office, Saxony, vol. lxiv.
† Dispatch of 29th January. ‡ Dispatch of 24th January.

object 60,000 men were got in readiness; that the English kept the affair unsettled with trifles, disarranged its progress, and frustrated all his exertions. "I confess," concludes Bestucheff, "that I am almost inclined to suspect that the English have done all this to spy out the land, and to discover the sentiments of the empress Elizabeth respecting the king of Prussia."

Passing over all the intrigues and corruptions, fêtes and extravagances, plans and hopes, at the Russian court from 1747 to 1755, I come at once to the commencement of the latter year. In February, 1755, Mr. Guy Dickens, the English ambassador at St. Petersburg, wishes to be recalled, and writes*:—"His majesty should have at this court a minister in the full strength and vigour of his age, as, in their way of thinking here, they look upon a foreign minister not missing a court day, ball, masquerade, play, opera, or any other public diversion, to be the chief and principal object of his mission, which at my time of life I cannot do, and yet is absolutely necessary.

"The great chancellor's aversion to business is as great as that of the empress his mistress. If the great chancellor followed my advice, instead of writing representations, he would not lie in bed till noon; but at 10 o'clock be in the old favourite's† apartments, where the empress going frequently in and out, he would have opportunities enough to quicken her resolutions upon any points of business lying

* Russia, vol. lxii. Dispatches of 18th and 2nd February, and 4th and 14th March.

† The new favourite will soon be mentioned.

before her. For months together she has found not a moment of leisure to attend to business.

"Since last Wednesday* we have had not less than three masquerades and one opera, and there is not one day in this week, which is called the butter-week, that is not marked out for one diversion or other. The next week begins the Lent, when every body will be praying and fasting; and the week after that, half the town, as is usual, will be sick, by falling at once from the most luxurious, to the most abstemious way of living; so that, for these three weeks to come, we are not to expect any use will be made here of pen, paper, and ink. Afterwards I hope to set matters a-going†, for the empress cannot be always upon her knees, and other diversions must have their turn."

Yet after the expiration of this time, the complaints of the ambassador are repeated‡:—"Nothing" (he writes) "goes on. It proceeds from the diminution of the great chancellor's credit, or from the increase of the empress's aversion to business, or from both, as is most likely. The great chancellor never sees or speaks to the empress himself; everything is transacted by representations in writing, which the great chancellor sends to the young favourite, Iwan Schuwalof, who lays them before the empress when he finds her in the humour to do business. Every where we meet with little dirty intrigues.

"The great chancellor himself complains of this state of affairs and these delays. Such proceedings§, he said, were a prostitution of their credit and reputation in the eyes of their friends and foes, but he

* Dispatch of 11th March, 1755.
† Dispatch of 18th March.
‡ Dispatch of 25th March.
§ Dispatch of 4th April.

knew no help; for since my last, the young favourite, through whose hands all affairs of great or little consequence pass at present, has been very ill, by having over-heated himself in the bacchanalian life which was led here the week before last; so that, till he is perfectly recovered, we are not to expect the empress will mind any business. The young favourite's fit of illness * is changed into the rheumatism, which takes up the care and thoughts of the whole court."

While affairs at St. Petersburg were in this state of stagnation, the relation between England and France assumed a more and more serious character.

On the 12th of May the English plenipotentiary, Ruvigny de Cosne (?), writes from Paris† :—"I am persuaded M. Ronillé's personal inclination is for preserving the public tranquillity, and I find the general wish in this country is for peace; particularly on this occasion, as they seem to have no opinion of the French marine being in a condition to cope with that of Great Britain."

I cannot undertake to give in this place even an extract from the excessively voluminous negotiations relative to America. Both sides made proposals and counter-proposals which, they reciprocally affirmed, could not be accepted, and neither could give up what doubtless belonged to it. The French wished that all hostilities in America should be forbidden, and then the negotiations continued; as the weaker party, they appeared to make the most reasonable proposals. The English, on the other hand, who were better prepared, desired to lose no time, but in some way speedily to enforce their demands.

* Dispatch of 5th April. † France, vol. cxix.

Such was the state of affairs, when Mr. Williams, the new English ambassador at St. Petersburg, received the following instructions from Lord Holderness*:—"It is not probable that the differences between England and France will be amicably settled, and hence (so the French ambassadors at London and the Hague openly affirm) a general war will follow. For this reason, and because the treaty concluded with Russia in 1742 expires in 1757, a new one must be promptly made. On this occasion, it will be proper to convince the Russians that they will remain only an Asiatic power, if they sit still and give the king of Prussia an opportunity of putting in execution his ambitious, dangerous, and long-concerted schemes of aggrandizement. His majesty has authorized you, by your full powers and instructions, to do what may be necessary on his part for preventing such a calamity."

Had Frederick II. even cherished in his heart a wish to conquer all Europe, he had given no indication of it since the peace of Dresden, and was by no means so situated with respect to all the other powers, that it would have been an easy game for him to play. He had much more to fear than to hope, and more reason to think even now of defence than of groundless attack. These expressions of Holderness were therefore words without facts and proofs, chiefly because he looked upon Frederick merely as an auxiliary of France, and regarded only what was immediately before him. The policy of the court of Vienna was more prudent, judicious, and natural.

* Instructions of the 11th April, 1755. Russia, vol. lxii.

On the 22nd of May, 1755, Keith writes from Vienna*:—"Count Kaunitz wishes that England and France may agree, for a maritime war may easily lead to a war by land, attended by very evil consequences. He had the empress's express orders to assure me, in the strongest and most direct terms, that she thought her interests inseparable from, or more properly to be the same with, those of his majesty; and that the empress was persuaded her own safety was only to be found in that of her allies,—especially of the king. That, in that light, she was resolved to fulfil all her engagements, not only to the letter, but to the sense, of the treaty, by exerting her utmost force for that purpose.

"Kaunitz spoke further of France as a hostile power, and expressed apprehensions for the Austrian Netherlands. If Maria Theresa were secured by Russia against Prussia, she would assist the king of England in Flanders and Hanover,—but not before.

"Kaunitz added, he hoped that his majesty did not consider the empress as his ally alone against France, but likewise against the king of Prussia, who, though not so powerful as the other, was fully as dangerous. He observed that this new power had quite changed the old system of Europe, and that nothing could set it to rights but making ourselves sure of the Russians."

On the 19th of June, Keith said to Kaunitz†:—"It is almost certain that we should have the Russian troops immediately at our command, and ready to make such a diversion against his Prussian majesty

* Austria, vol. cxc. † Ibid.

as would make him think twice before he engaged himself in an offensive war against her imperial majesty."

Here England and Austria appear to be active in hostility against Frederick, while the latter had not done anything similar, either alone or in conjunction with others. Austria, however, notwithstanding the above assertions of Keith, would not send an army to Flanders, and thereby irritate France, and expose itself on the side of Prussia. It very clearly stated the motives of its conduct in a note of the 1st of June, in which is the following passage:—"England doubtless does not imagine that we do not perfectly comprehend the great difference between a treaty to be made and a treaty concluded, between 60,000 Russians on paper, in cantonments very distant from each other, and 80,000 Prussians, who can assemble in a fortnight, and fall upon the dominions of the empress."

Notwithstanding this apparently perfect concord between England and Austria, Keith, however, found reason to ask for explanations respecting the relations between the latter court and France*. Kaunitz answered:—"The French boast of their love of peace, abuse England, and endeavour to prejudice Austria against it. But I might easily believe he knew the court of Austria too well to be imposed on by their little arts, and that he did not put more than the just value on the sincerity of their declarations. He said they had taken effectual, though secret, measures for providing everything that was necessary to take the field upon a day's warning."

* Dispatch of the 17th June, 1755. Austria, vol. cxci.

This inclination to war was not, however, directed to a war in Flanders, but in Silesia. Accordingly, Lord Holderness was extremely dissatisfied when he received the above-mentioned note, and wrote to Keith*:—"It would be very easy for me to refute the false reasonings of that absurd paper."

It became the more necessary to remove the hesitation which is here blamed, as the French pressed the English in North America, and the latter had, by way of retaliation, captured two ships of the line (by Admiral Boscawen) off Newfoundland, on the 10th of June†. The French would not let this pass as a mere mistake, or enter into negotiations for the restoration of the ships, but considered themselves both deceived and affronted; so that the French ambassador left London without taking leave.

In order to induce Austria to act against France, England persisted in its endeavours to excite Russia against Prussia. "Not only Bestucheff," says Williams on the 4th of July‡, "is for an alliance with England,' but Woronzow also has seen his error, and is now persuaded that the king of Prussia is the power of whom Russia ought to be the most jealous, as being her most natural and formidable enemy."

One feels inclined to contradict the foolish idea, that Frederick projected an offensive war against Russia; but it seems quite unnecessary to take this trouble, as we find the grounds for that conviction developed in the ambassador's letter:—"Mr. Olsufiow is the soul of Woronzow, who speaks but as

* Letter of 6th August. Ibid.
† Dispatches of 20th and 22nd July. France, vol. cxix.
‡ Russia, vol. lxii.

Olsufiow prompts. For 1500 ducats ready money and 500 per annum pension, I can secure this person, and I imagine I can make very great use of him. Funk, the Saxon ambassador, has similar influence; he serves his court faithfully, but has received no salary for nine quarters, and therefore is often in great distress. He will serve the king faithfully for the same sum which I have proposed for Olsufiow.

"The third person who must be gained is Wolkow, the private secretary of Bestucheff. A present of 500 ducats and a pension of 250 will make this person my own. Hitherto, however, I have made preliminary offers only to Olsufiow."

On the 24th of July, Holderness approves the payment of all these sums, and on the 9th of August Williams writes* that "a convention had at length been signed with Russia, the main object of which was aid against France and co-operation with Austria."

Besides the usual diplomatic presents, Bestucheff received 10,000*l.*, and then cunningly enough requested that an extraordinary present might be given to Woronzow. Olsufiow accepted with thanks what was offered; whether a similar arrangement was effected with Funk does not appear.

"It is certain," continues Williams, "that whatever money this court is to receive by the first secret article, goes into the empress's privy purse; and as she is at present building two or three very large palaces, she wants a sum of money to carry on these buildings; and this has greatly contributed to finish the convention so soon!

* Russia, vol. lxiii., and the Dispatches of 11th August and 2nd October.

"The empress's aversion to France and Prussia grows daily stronger, and her attachment to the king and his allies (Austria) increases so fast, that I will engage, weak as I am, by the help of those little assistances I have asked of the king, to put this court more in his majesty's hands than ever it was yet in those of any other sovereign, and that nothing shall be done here that shall be contrary to his majesty's inclination, or different from what he shall dictate."

We shall see how this excessive confidence of the ambassador misled also the English court. Both forgot that when resolutions are adopted without reasons, or only for secondary reasons, nobody can calculate with certainty, and that, where the true interest of the state is given up to the highest bidder, more purchasers are likely to appear; and still more in case that a great change of relations and policy affords an easy opportunity for pretexts and evasions.

The ambassador continues:—"The great chancellor Bestucheff exerted himself much to our advantage. Great joy appeared in his face when he found his avarice satisfied by the private offers. Woronzow, too, did his best. Would his majesty be pleased to give him something above his ordinary fees, to buy him a ring: 500*l.* bestowed in this manner would have a great effect in carrying on future business in this court."

Two days after, 11th of August, Williams writes*: —"The great chancellor assured me, in the strongest terms, that any augmentation of the first pay-

* Russia, vol. lxiii., and the Dispatches of 11th August and 2nd October.

ment, stipulated by the first secret article, would be extremely agreeable, and a sort of personal obligation to her imperial majesty. This augmentation shall put both this court and the empress entirely into his majesty's management: 50,000*l.* or so, for the empress's private use, would have a great effect. In short, all that has been given hitherto, is to purchase the assistance of the forces of Russia, but this last sum, if given, will purchase the empress."

The more contented and happy Williams felt, at having concluded the long wished-for treaty, the more unexpected and unpleasant must it have been to him, that much fault was found in England, both with its form and contents*. First it was demanded that a copy should be signed by the king of England alone, and his name placed first; and still more fault was found with the alterations made in the first project, respecting the departure and the march of the army, the time for making the payment, &c.

Kaunitz was more satisfied with the treaty†, which was calculated to be dangerous, not to the French, but to the Prussians.

On the 2nd of October, Williams writes from St. Petersburg‡:—"The health of the empress is bad. She is affected with spitting of blood, shortness of breath, constant coughing, swelled legs, and water on the chest; yet she danced a minuet with me§. There is a great fermentation at court. Peter does not conceal his enmity to the Schuwalofs; Catherine

* Holderness to Williams, 23th August. Russia, vol. lxiii.

† Dispatch from Vienna of 3rd September. Austria, vol. cxci.

‡ Russia, vol. lxiii.

§ Williams was such an ambassador as Guy Dickens had described as fit for St. Petersburg.

is on good terms with Bestucheff. As her imperial highness (Catherine) is the person who, in case of accidents, will rule here, I think it my duty to inform the king of my observations upon her, which I can the better do, because I often have conversations with her for hours together, as my rank places me at supper always next to her. Since her coming to this country, she has, by every method in her power, endeavoured to gain the affections of this nation; she applied herself with diligence to study their language, and speaks it at present (as the Russians tell me) in the greatest perfection. She has also succeeded in her other aim, for she is esteemed and beloved here in a high degree. Her person is very advantageous, and her manners very captivating. She has a great knowledge of this empire, and makes it her only study. She has parts, and the great chancellor tells me that nobody has more steadiness and resolution.

"She has of late declared herself openly to me, in respect of the king of Prussia*. She is not only convinced that he is the natural and formidable enemy of Russia, but I find she hates him personally. She told me lately, in speaking of the prince of Prussia, that he has not his Prussian majesty's understanding, and as to his heart, it could not be so bad as his brother's, because the king of Prussia's was certainly the worst in the world.

"She never mentions the king of England but with the utmost respect and highest regard; is thoroughly sensible of the utility of the union between England and Russia; always calls his majesty the empress's best and greatest ally, and flatters herself

* We may doubt whether Catherine spoke quite sincerely.

that the king will also give his friendship and protection to the great duke and herself.

"As for the great duke, he is weak and violent, but his confidence in the great duchess is so great, that sometimes he tells people that, though he does not understand things himself, yet his wife understands everything.

"Should the empress, as I fear, soon die, the government will quietly devolve on them."

"A Mr. Douglas, arriving here from Paris, the suspicious Austrian ambassador* asked him, what he meant to do in this country? and he answered, I am come by the advice of my physician for the benefit of a cold climate."

CHAPTER XXIV.

State of the affairs of Europe—Frederick II. stands alone—Divergence of the English and Austrian Policy—Lord Holderness's new Declarations and Instructions—Approximation of England and Prussia—The Mistakes of England—Treaty between England and Prussia—Dissatisfaction excited by it in Petersburg and Vienna—New Demands of Russia refused by England—Intrigue in St. Petersburg—Elizabeth against Frederick—Preparations for War in Austria—Approximation to France—Treaty with France—Fruitless counter-efforts of Sardinia and England—Activity of the Great Duchess Catherine—Declarations of War between England and France.

After various repeated difficulties, the treaty between England and Russia was concluded, though not yet ratified by the empress†. All parties con-

* Dispatch of the 7th of October.

† Dispatch of 18th November. Russia, vol. lxiii.

sidered this as an important, perhaps decisive, event.

What then was the state of affairs? The maritime war between England and France was inevitable, or rather had already broken out. England now wished, either to preserve peace on the continent, in order that it might act with undivided forces at sea, or to carry on the war by land with the assistance of Austria and Russia, in such a manner that Prussia and France might be overpowered. Of the possibility of inducing France to join Austria, or of separating Prussia from France, no mention whatever is yet made. Now Prussia was in no strict connexion with France; on the contrary, the treaty concluded between them (besides that it was of little or no importance in circumstances entirely new) would soon expire. Consequently, Frederick stood quite alone, and had the most imperative inducement to consider what was to be done in so critical a situation. For the danger which threatened Prussia, from England, Russia, and Austria, appeared much greater than the assistance which might be expected from France.

It would undoubtedly have been the most salutary and the wisest plan, for the continent of Europe, to keep France from Germany, and Austria from Prussia; in a word, to avoid every war. This was Frederick's first and immediate object. But was it that of the other powers? From the dispatches already communicated, this may well be doubted, and, after what I am now going to produce, it may be positively denied.

In the first place, it is strange that, from August to November, 1755, or rather to February, 1756,

the Austrian ministers spoke, as good as not at all, upon business with the English ambassador Keith, at Vienna*; and it is probable that the English ministers in London acted in the same manner. A suspicion is also expressed, that Austria is carrying on negotiations in Russia, of which England has no knowledge; nay, Williams writes†, "that Count Zinzendorf, who had lately arrived at St. Petersburg, excites the jealousy even of the Austrian ambassador Esterhazy." It is likely, however, that Esterhazy, who was well informed, only affected this, in order the better to deceive Williams.

A sudden ray of light falls into the obscurity, and affords us a glance of the most profound secrets, of which scarcely any one had hitherto thought, and none had ventured to speak. On the 10th of October, 1755, Lord Holderness plainly says to Mitchell‡: "Our object is France; Austria's, is Prussia. Nor will they give us assistance against the one, unless we make an enemy of the other, and help them to recover what they have lost in the last war; and surely, in our present circumstances, it would have been madness for us to have thought of such a scheme."

To this remarkable text, the new instructions, which Lord Holderness sent to Mr. Williams at St. Petersburg, on the 26th of December, 1755 §, furnish a complete and instructive commentary. The substance of it is as follows:—"The first object of the English negotiations at the Russian court, was

* State-paper Office, Russia, vol. cxci.
† Dispatch of 8th November. Russia, vol. lxiii.
‡ Mitchell papers, vol. xxxix. § Russia, vol. lxiii.

directed against Prussia, in case the differences, which arose between the king of England and that prince, had been pushed to extremity. Next came, in the second place, the far more important American disputes and far greater objects; the offers for subsidies were also increased. The main object, however, was to preserve the peace of Europe. We have, therefore, communicated to Prussia the treaty concluded between Russia and England, with the intimation that it was by no means meant as an offensive or hostile measure against his Prussian majesty; but that its sole object was to obtain security against all attacks.

"I need not hide from you," continues Lord Holderness, "that the Austrian minister here has taken umbrage at the public declarations made in parliament. They suspect a predilection for the king of Prussia, and insinuate an alteration of measures in England, with no other foundation than because the king of England has not willingly suffered the king of Prussia to be forced into hostile measures (perhaps contrary to his present intentions) by France, at a time when no other power in Europe, besides England and France, is directly interested in the differences which subsist; and when a refusal, on the part of the court of Berlin, to enter into the French system, may be the best means of preserving peace in Europe, which is at all times so desirable, and now so necessary.

"Thus far, perhaps, it may not be improper to drop, in a conversing manner, to the Russian ministers, in order to sound them how far the court of Vienna may have endeavoured to mislead them, by reasoning upon phantoms of their own imaginations,

and without any real knowledge of the truth of what is going on.

"But, for your own private information, I have the king's leave to inform you of a fact of the utmost importance, and which requires the strictest secrecy. It is to acquaint you, that in consequence of what passed between Mr. Michel (the Prussian ambassador) and myself, he has received orders from his court to acquaint me, that the king his master was much pleased with the communication which had been made to him of the Russian treaty, and of the sentiments expressed by the king upon this occasion. That, inclining to preserve the peace of Europe in general, he is desirous to begin with securing that of Germany; and thinks that this end may be best obtained by a treaty of neutrality for the empire, during the present troubles, drawn up in such a manner as not to give offence to any other power; and Mr. Michel proceeded to chalk out a method for accommodating the differences which had arisen between his majesty and the king of Prussia.

"In this spirit, a project of a treaty has been drawn up. If the king of Prussia is sincere, the peace of Germany may undoubtedly be maintained; as it cannot be imagined that France would venture to march an army into the empire, if Prussia is seriously determined to oppose it. But if (which is not to be supposed) the king of Prussia should have some sinister motive in the overtures he has made, endeavours may possibly be used, even by himself, to instil jealousies at Petersburg, as if we were neglecting the Russian alliance, and entering into secret measures for defeating it. The very contrary is the case. The king knows that the con-

clusion of the treaty of Russia is one great inducement to the king of Prussia's present way of thinking, and his majesty is persuaded that the Czarina's known magnanimity will be equally satisfied with having greatly contributed to preserve peace and security to her allies, *par un coup de plume*, as if she had an opportunity of showing the bravery of her troops and the greatness of the power of her arms.

"But if you should not have the greatest reason to think that the king of Prussia should have been beforehand, and either unfolded the mystery, or endeavour to graft insinuations upon it, that the measure is repugnant to the thorough confidence and close alliance which it is his majesty's most sincere intention to preserve with the empress of Russia, you must keep it all secret, even from the great chancellor Bestucheff himself.

"And I must add yet another caution,—that you should not be led to make a communication of this important nature, even though the Austrian minister should use his endeavours to raise suspicion or uneasiness at St. Petersburg, upon the measures which the king finds it necessary to undertake in order to procure the peace and tranquillity of the empire, which the court of Vienna themselves have but too much neglected. Perhaps the Austrian ambassador may have been instructed to do ill offices to the king's service at St. Petersburg; but you are neither to complain nor resent the behaviour of the court of Vienna, but in case of extremity to act only on the defensive."

Thus, at the conclusion of the year 1755, a new world of great and important events opens to our

view. What is the first conclusion to be drawn from the mere consideration of the above remarkable instructions?

First, England ought not, for the sake of subordinate differences with Prussia, to have excited the Russian court so indefinitely against that power; it ought, in negotiating the treaty with Russia, to have brought forward more decidedly the specific object. Russia, and still more Austria, did not think of preventing war by this means, but of giving occasion for it.

Secondly, the English would undoubtedly gain if they could preserve peace on the Continent, by means of Austria, Russia, and Prussia, and avail themselves, without interruption, of their superiority at sea.

Thirdly, the king of Prussia, under existing circumstances, undoubtedly wished for peace for many reasons. He was at that time the most disposed to peace of all the parties. What is to be said in this respect of Russia and Austria will immediately appear.

In the first place Russia, which had certainly received private information, made a thousand excuses to delay the fulfilment of the treaty with England*. The defensive alliance between England and Prussia for the preservation of peace, and against the entrance of foreign troops into Germany, had, on the other hand, been concluded on the 16th of January, 1756, and it was impossible any longer to keep it secret. As all parties extolled the motive, and the alliance did not injure the interest of any power, Holderness imagined that he had already attained

* Dispatch of the 10th January, 1756. Russia, vol. lxiv.

his object, and considered it an easy matter to justify the proceedings of England and Prussia in Vienna and St. Petersburg.

On the 6th of February he sent a copy of the treaty to St. Petersburg, and added*, that Austria had hitherto always declared it could do nothing for England, so long as it was not secured against Prussia. This is now the case, and better than if it had been effected merely by force. If the court of Vienna (which, however, his majesty will not suppose to be the case) ever did entertain hopes that his majesty would have joined in so wild and extravagant a view, as that of making the destruction of the king of Prussia's power the condition upon which the house of Austria would have afforded this assistance to the maritime powers against France, it was high time they should be undeceived, and be convinced that no consideration could ever oblige his majesty to enter into so impracticable and so unjust a project.

"It is not difficult to conceive that the court of Vienna might have had other hopes from the Russian treaty; but had any other use been made of it, it would no longer have been a pacific or preventive measure, but, on the contrary, have immediately drawn on a most dangerous war, which, if successful, might indeed have been beneficial to the house of Austria, but could never have produced any solid advantage to his majesty, or at least not such as could have been in any way adequate to the immense expense and hazarding of such an undertaking.

"If Austria will still look upon Prussia as her ir-

* Dispatch of the 10th January, 1756. Russia, vol. lxiv.

reconcileable enemy, and act towards it as such, they cannot wonder that his majesty should decline joining in views which must carry ruin and inevitable destruction with them."

On th 17th of February, Williams replied*:—"I think, and may seriously venture to assure your lordship, that the Prussian treaty will have no bad effect at this court. I labour day and night to prevent it, and hope my pains will not be ineffectual."

Two days later his courage had already failed, though he still deceives himself, and is deceived by others. He writes†:—"The ratification lay upon the empress's table for five weeks, and I am sorry to say that she keeps the two chancellors in such awe, that they are not upon a foot of putting her majesty in mind of signing a paper."

Several of the principal persons are evidently against England; for instance, Peter Schuwalof, because he has received no present, and he again governs the young favourite Iwan Schuwalof.

At length the empress signed the treaty, but added a condition to the following effect‡:—"That the treaty that had just been ratified shall be valid only in case the king of Prussia shall attack the dominions of his majesty the king of Great Britain or those of his allies." Now, as Austria had been the chief ally of England, and was still considered as such in St. Petersburg, this addition, in the actual state of things, made the treaty of no importance whatever. They, however, conduced to represent the matter in a more favourable light to the English

* Dispatch of the 10th January, 1756. Russia, vol. lxiv.
† Dispatch of the 19th February. Russia, vol. lxiv.
‡ The 14th February, O. S. Ibid.

ambassador. The two chancellors affirmed that this addition was not their work, but they hoped to defeat it, if I would adopt it and send it to England. It was drawn up in the apartments of Schuwalof, laid before the empress, and sent to Bestucheff.

"The latter, having quarrelled with Iwan Schuwalof, has greatly altered the state of affairs at this court. Iwan's power gains daily, and Peter Schuwalof is absolutely necessary to his majesty's interest, so that he should be gained.

"After receiving the treaty with Prussia I went to Bestucheff, who wished me joy on the new alliance; but added, that the empress would certainly take it ill that the communication of this treaty had been made to Count Colloredo before it was made to Prince Gallitzin: and that any new union between his majesty and Prussia would be very disagreeable to her imperial majesty; to which I answered, that such a treaty could offend nobody but France, except such as were already inclined to be offended. I hope that Bestucheff will do everything that the empress may not misunderstand the new alliance, and be misled to take a false view of it. To this he answered,—But what will the court of Vienna say to it*? To which I replied, that if the Austrian ministry really desired the continuation of the peace, they could not possibly say anything against it. I did not think it proper even to hint to the chancellor, that the conduct of Austria had been one of the chief reasons that had induced his majesty to take this step.

"Hereupon Bestucheff gave me a very broad hint that he had not yet received the money pro-

* This was no answer to Williams's question.

mised him; on which I assured him that he would certainly receive it. But in case he had need of it, and would heartily serve the king in this last affair, and prevent any jealousies that other courts might stir up in the empress's breast, I would engage Baron Wolff should immediately advance him what had been promised him. He gave me assurances to do all I could wish; and, in conformity to this assurance, he sent Prince Gallitzin's dispatches, which were arrived the night before, but just then deciphered, to the empress, with some comments upon them, which were dictated by me, wherein he said that the convention of Petersburg was what had already produced these pacific sentiments in his Prussian majesty, and obliged me to make those steps towards the king which had occasioned this treaty; and that, therefore, the honour of it was full as glorious for the empress, to preserve the peace of Europe by signing her name as to restore it by a victory."

Woronzow readily agreed to all; but then said to Williams (who did not observe or take notice of this ambiguity), "that since now the Russian army would not be obliged to take long marches*, I might depend upon it, that when the king of Prussia attempted anything to disturb the peace, the empress would fulfil all the engagements upon that occasion."

These words were further explained and confirmed by the declaration mentioned above, that the empress would do nothing but keep the king of Prussia in awe, and attack him in case he should attack the king or any of his allies, and excuses her from marching into Flanders or Germany under false

* Against France.

pretences, or in hopes of obtaining more money. In fact, these words were of no value with respect to England, while Russia, by the term allies, undoubtedly meant Austria. Yet Williams was so blind as to rejoice that Russia would compel the king of Prussia to remain faithful to his new engagements, and would even attack him with a greater force than was fixed by the treaty.

Esterhazy also (Williams further relates with great delight) had faithfully and honourably supported him, as well as Bestucheff, and the latter was so devoted to him that he feared nothing from Vienna. Peter Schuwalof must at all events be gained, and a sword be sent to general Apraxin, as Lord Hyndford had promised him. Apraxin does mischief, and makes a great noise at a court where almost every minister is publicly known to be venal.

Esterhazy had received no instructions from Vienna, and answered to the empress Elizabeth, he could speak only as a private person, upon the treaty with Prussia, the object of which was the preservation of peace. The empress, so Esterhazy told Williams, seemed a little piqued at the treaty, and had told him that she expected that the king of England and the court of Vienna would have formed some system for reducing the king of Prussia's power, which she was very ready and desirous to do at all times.

It may be doubtful how far the Russian minister and Esterhazy designed to mislead Williams; what they did tell him was certainly sufficient to convince him that Prussia never could expect the least from Russia.

In the beginning of February, Keith received in-

telligence at Vienna of the treaty concluded between Prussia and England *, and proved, to Kaunitz, that it contained nothing hostile to Austria, but was the most prudent measure for the prevention of the war. At first Kaunitz merely observed, it was a thing they had long expected. On the 11th of February he thanked him for the communication, and only added (without at all entering further into the subject), that they hoped his majesty would reap the advantage he had proposed to himself.

The Prussian ambassador Klinggräf, however, perceived that Austria was highly displeased at the treaty, and would unite with France; but Keith, as well as Williams, adhered so steadily to the old system of policy, that he wrote, that the court of Vienna would hardly be too precipitate with a measure, which (if they are not absolutely deprived of all judgment, nay, of common sense) they must see would infallibly end in their own ruin.

Notwithstanding this, great preparations for war by Austria were spoken of on the 18th of February; and, on the 6th of March, Klinggräf was more fully acquainted with Parisian affairs than Keith. At least, the former asserted, that consultations had already been held there with the Austrian ambassador, Count Stahremberg, on plans of operations upon the Rhine and in Silesia.

England, however, certainly did not believe, that by an approximation to Prussia it could lose either Austria, or, still less, Russia.

In regard to the latter power, Williams, however, had new consolation at hand; and on the 19th of

* Dispatch of February, 1756. Austria, vol. cxcii.

February wrote*, the empress Elizabeth could scarcely live six months longer, and Catherine entirely agreed with him respecting the treaty. But the main question, which was constantly evaded, was, what was the real object and intention of the treaty between England and Russia, under the present circumstances? After a long conversation with the all-powerful Iwan Schuwalof, Williams writes†:— "That if the king of Prussia took any hostile steps against the king or his allies, the empress would certainly fall upon him and attack him immediately." Expressions of this kind showed that no notice was taken at Petersburg of the treaty between England and Prussia, and that Frederick II. was not reckoned among the allies of George II. It is not likely that this was communicated on the part of England to Frederick, though he probably learnt it through some other channel.

On the 6th and 16th of March William writes, still under delusion‡, Austria has done nothing at all in St. Petersburg against the Prussian treaty. "Esterhazy comes in the most friendly manner to me, and tells me all the news he can pick up. I hear from Wolkow (private secretary to Bestucheff), that the alarm which the empress has taken in regard to the Prussian treaty begins to wear off."

Nine days after this, however, Williams learns that there had been great deliberations at Petersburg§, whether the whole treaty with England should not be declared null and void, in consequence of the treaty with Prussia: that Bestucheff

* Russia, vol. lxiv. † Dispatch of 28th February, ibid.
‡ Ibid. § Dispatch of 27th March.

had successfully opposed it; but the latter excused himself from seeing Williams, adding, by way of consolation, that all would still be well.

Meantime the Russian observations and additional articles were discussed in London; and it was resolved to abide entirely by the treaty. On the 30th of March, Holderness wrote to Williams* :—"I am surprised at the new declaration, which I hereby return, and consider the treaty in itself sufficient. The declaration in question is of so delicate a nature, and would so justly give offence to the king of Prussia, were it to become public, that the king thinks the less is said of it the better. Take care that it be quickly and entirely suppressed.

"I may in confidence tell you, that according to some advices of good authority, a plan has been formed by France, and adopted at Vienna, by which it is intended that France should attempt, with a very great force, at once to attack the king of Prussia in the duchy of Cleves and his majesty's German dominions, which attempt is to be supported by the Austrian forces on that part of Silesia which has been ceded to the king of Prussia. In this case England would be obliged to claim the assistance of Russia, and also a declaration from the empress what she would do in such a case."

Lord Holderness expresses himself still more plainly in a second letter of the same date:—"The king was greatly surprised that after what you had wrote to me concerning the good intentions of the two chancellors, and their resolution to represent the Prussian treaty in a favourable light to the empress, Prince Galitzin should have received in-

* Russia, vol. lxxxiv.

structions so widely different from what the king had reason to expect by the tenor of your letters. That minister came to me some days ago, and read to me a French translation of a very long rescript he had received from his court, full of complaints, jealousies, and uneasiness, founded chiefly on a supposition, that by the second article of the late treaty, his majesty engaged not to enter into any alliance, or even come to any composition with the king of Prussia, without a previous concert with the Czarina of Russia.

"But I flatter myself I convinced Galitzin of the fallacy of this argument, and that the article quoted could only take place when, in consequence of the Czarina's engagements, she had taken part in a war actually begun; but that now peace prevailed, and there was no common enemy to combat. Nor could his majesty think himself precluded by the treaty from taking any steps he might think proper, with any power whatsoever, for preventing the calamities of war from reaching Europe, which was the avowed principle upon which the treaty with Russia was undertaken."

It was, however, almost more important to change the dispositions of Austria than of Russia. Count Canale, the Sardinian ambassador, made the most earnest representations at Venice for maintaining the old system*, and endeavoured to represent the treaty between Prussia and England in a favourable light. "Far from being an object of jealousy, it ought to be considered as a very proper and necessary measure in the present situation of affairs, and from which, if rightly improved, great advantages

* Dispatch of Keith, 3rd April. Austria, vol. cxcii.

might be drawn for the service of the common cause." The emperor and empress, however, could not be brought to make any positive declarations, but merely answered—"They never had done, or ever would do, anything that their allies could justly find fault with." Count Canule says he could observe, that whenever he touched upon the treaty of Prussia, there appeared a sensible emotion in the empress's countenance; and when he mentioned a report that run about a negotiation with France, their majesties turned the discourse.

A week later, on the 11th of April *, Mr. Williams writes from St. Petersburg:—"Three weeks ago Esterhazy received new instructions, which led to the great consultation, whether the treaty with England should be kept or not. Woronzow proposed that it should be revoked; but the Schuwalofs were gained, and by the help and interposition of the great duchess, who at my earnest request took great pains in the affair, at length brought it to bear. Bestucheff spoke so positively in its favour, that the empress reprimanded him, but without shaking his courage. Six votes against four decided for us; namely, the great duke Peter, Bestucheff, the two Schuwalofs, Apraxin, and Gallitzin; against Woronzow, Bestucheff II., Trubetzkoi, and Butturlin.

"The great duchess continues in the same good way of thinking, and seeks for occasions to do the king all the service in her power. She owned to me that she was struck when she first heard of the treaty with Prussia; but that since it had been explained

* Russia, vol. lxiv.

to her by the great chancellor and myself, she had nothing to say against it; but she hoped that the alliance between England, Austria, and Russia, would remain firm, and continue to be the system of the three courts.

"A paper was given me to read, to the effect that the courts of Vienna and Petersburg must persevere in their objections, the rather as the king of Prussia was negotiating with the duke of Nivernois; that if this was done with the knowledge of England, it was so much the worse; that Frederick aims at the part of a mediator,—at honour and addition of territory; that the king of England should take great care not to let him interfere, and to procure him that honour; that the king should never trust his interest to a person of known partiality towards France, of constant attention to his own aggrandizement, and upon whose promise there is no reliance to be made.

"The court of Vienna complained here in very strong terms of the king's abandoning their interests, and even hinted that they might be obliged to seek other allies. For in a note which the great chancellor wrote to the great duchess, he told her that Austria was so much out of humour with England, that this court was obliged to soothe and flatter the empress-queen at present, lest she might be provoked to take engagements with the court of Versailles.

"The activity of the great duchess Catherine is very great. She declared, that whoever attempted to destroy the union between England, Austria, and Russia, was no friend to this empire. She is beloved and already feared in this country; and those who

are upon the best footing with the empress, seek every occasion of making an underhand court to her imperial highness.

"The empress's aversion to the king of Prussia's person and power breaks out very often.

"I am afraid the ministers at Vienna employ their thoughts more upon regaining Silesia than about the safety of their allies and the peace of Europe; and, consequently, are alarmed at any project of an approaching tranquillity. They will not remember that they themselves were the real occasion of his majesty taking this step with Prussia; and they now declaim against the measure which their own ill conduct made absolutely necessary.

"The empress's passions never last long; and though it is a bad task to *determine* her majesty to anything, yet it is a very easy one to *prevent* her taking any resolution; the whole ministry can hardly do the first, and almost the weakest of them can do the latter.

"The state of her health is far from being good; it makes her wish for quiet and peace. She is grown very melancholy, and lives a very retired life; and whereas, formerly, she used to be every day abroad, either in a chair or on horseback, she has not been out of her house but once this whole winter."'

Meantime the duke of Nivernois had had an ineffectual negotiation with king Frederick at Berlin, and had returned to Paris on the 21st of April*. Only nine days later, the 1st of May, 1756, a treaty was concluded at Versailles between France and Austria; it only went so far as neutrality respecting the American disputes with England—the mutual

* Vallory, ii. 6—14.

security of possessions, and defence against foreign attacks. On the 17th of May, England made a formal declaration of war against France; and, on the 9th of June, France declared war against England.

CHAPTER XXV.

War by Sea and Land—Political state of Prussia and Austria—Feelings of Austria respecting the Union of England with Prussia—Keith, Kaunitz, Count Colloredo—Reply of the Court of Vienna—Keith's Audience of Maria Theresa—Her relation to France—The two Empresses—Complaint of Keith respecting Kaunitz.

THE counterpart of the treaty between England and Prussia was the treaty of Austria with France. The ostensible object of both was to maintain peace; and, had all parties been seriously disposed, it might have been attained. But they supposed such a change in European policy,—dividing what had long been united, and uniting what had long been separated,—that regret, vexation, and misunderstanding were not wanting, and almost brought about a war.

It therefore was, and is, the more important to obtain a thorough insight into the *real* state of affairs at that time, so as not to be misled by mere excuses.

England, without doubt, earnestly desired peace by land, on the grounds that have already been several times alluded to. While, however, it took for granted the war by land, and gained over Russia against Prussia, it prepared for itself the difficult task which it had now to perform, of removing the

prejudices of Russia against Frederick: in fact, the conduct of the court of Petersburg was actuated by passion, hatred, self-interest, and ignorance.

France would not object to a war by land, if it offered advantageous prospects, and, as Prussia drew back, endeavoured to strengthen itself by assistance from Austria. So far its proceeding may be excused. It became as foolish as that of Russia from the moment that its hatred to Frederick seduced it into the error of an offensive war.

Frederick, if he did not wish to remain quite insulated, had only the choice of uniting with England or France. He preferred the alliance with the former power, because it did not favour war, but peace. He negotiated this time more like a German prince than he did in 1740.

Austria was by no means injured by the treaty between England and Prussia; but the whole system of policy which it had hitherto perseveringly pursued was overturned; for its constant and highest object was undoubtedly the recovery of Silesia. It desired war. It cannot be altogether blamed on that account: it did what has not only been often done, but what sometimes (contrary to the letter of treaties) may be a positive right, and an imperative duty, as, for instance, the year 1813 proves. Austria could calculate with certainty that there would be no want for occasions and pretexts for war. It was more difficult to get the preponderance of power on its side. It thought that it would gain in France more than it lost in England; and if, (an undeniable triumph of diplomatic skill!) besides France, Russia could also be induced to draw the sword for the cause of Austria, it would, indeed, have been a very

great folly to suffer this only favourable opportunity to escape. That the blindness of the courts of Versailles and St. Petersburg would continue, seven years, was certainly more than Kaunitz could then hope for, or Frederick II. fear.

I shall, however, proceed from unnecessary reflections to historical communications; and first to some extracts from the dispatches of Keith from Vienna.

On the 7th of April, 1756, Keith delivered the treaty concluded with Prussia to the Count Kaunitz*, and observed, his object was by no means to injure any one, but merely to obtain peace. Even the secret article, that Prussia would not guarantee or protect the Austrian possessions in the Netherlands and in Italy, was entirely conformable to former treaties. "Kaunitz received what I said civilly, but very drily; and when I mentioned the secret article, he seemed surprised that the king of Prussia should pretend to give that sense to the eighth article of the treaty of Dresden. But I stopped his mouth, by showing that that was the true and natural sense of that article, as the war was then actually carrying on in the Netherlands; and that it was never expected that the king of Prussia should take any part in the defence of those provinces.

"Count Kaunitz then asked me if I really thought the treaty as advantageous as we represented it, or if I imagined it would be productive of the good consequences that we seemed to expect from it? This I endeavoured to prove. Besides, Austria had always asserted that, till it was secured against Prussia, it could not expose its provinces on that

* Dispatch of 16th May, Austria, vol. cxcii. Mitchell papers. Holderness dispatches, fol. 8.

side, and act elsewhere. It would be better to satisfy the king of Prussia than resort to violent measures against him. And, in order to provide against all events, the king of England had taken new measures with Russia, but which never were meant to be offensively made use of, without an absolute necessity. Perhaps the apprehension of these measures might have, in some degree, influenced the king of Prussia in his present resolution; and that the continuance and existence of the contract with Russia, was a good pledge for the good faith of his Prussian majesty, in executing his new engagements with the king of England.

"That as to the jealousies which the court of Vienna might conceive of a predilection for the Prussian alliance to that with the house of Austria, or that the new treaty might have taken place from pique or resentment, I gave Count Kaunitz the most positive assurances that it was far from his majesty's intention to alter or diminish his attachment to his old and natural allies; and that the king's great view in making this treaty was to endeavour thereby to repair the breach made in the old system by the defection of the house of Brandenburg, which, by the confession of the court of Vienna itself, made so great a change in the balance of Europe, that they were not in a condition, without a previous security against the power of Prussia, to take the necessary measures for those of their provinces which most immediately concerned the maritime powers.

"I concluded with saying that the king of England could by no means give way to suspicions of want of faith in the king of Prussia, or imagine that that prince could harbour any thought of disturbing

the empress in Germany; and that though his majesty was of opinion that it was not for her interest to entertain jealousies of that dangerous nature, yet if such a suspicion should be verified, and his Prussian majesty become the aggressor against the house of Austria, his majesty would look upon himself at full liberty, notwithstanding the late treaty, to fulfil his engagements with Austria, and even to reclaim the assistance of the Czarina, in consequence of her engagements to the king of England.

"I stopped here; and Count Kaunitz, who had heard me speak without entering into the conversation upon any of the other points, laid hold of this last part of my discourse, and said, with some vivacity, that he never had supposed that his majesty could intend, by the Prussian or any other treaty, to weaken the engagement he stood under, by former treaties, to his old allies.

"Taking this up, I replied—England can believe as little of alliances of Austria with France, which would have put a finishing stroke to the ancient system of Europe. As, however, there were various reports from all quarters, I requested an explanation on that point. It appeared, by Kaunitz's countenance, that he was a little surprised at my laying hold, in this manner, of what he had said, and in turning his argument against him; and I believe he was sorry he had let it drop. But, however, without taking any notice of it, he said that Austria never had done, and never would do, anything for which the empress was obliged to reproach herself, or respecting which her old allies could bring forward just complaints.

"From Kaunitz I immediately went to Count

Colloredo, to whom I made the same communication. He received me in a very different manner; for, in the place of the other's cold and dry civilities, he expressed himself with the greatest cordiality, and showed a sensible pleasure at those passages of my discourse which he thought might be agreeable to his court; making me repeat them over, taking notes, with an intention, I am very sure, to make use of them to open the eyes of his court, and bring them back to a right way of thinking."

In the latter expectation the English ambassador was, however, disappointed. Nothing was heard of Kaunitz, nor did he give the promised answer. It was not till the Sunday before the 16th of May (after everything had already been concluded at Versailles) "that he took me," continues Keith, "into his closet, and with a very mysterious air, told me he was now in a condition to give me the answer he had promised me. He told me to deliver this written-verbal note to my court, and then we should both have done our duty. It was as follows:—That her imperial majesty could not dissemble that the limitation of the neutrality to the states of Germany alone, had not a little surprised her, as she would be in evident danger elsewhere. Her majesty, however, wished the king of England all possible good, and that every advantage that was anticipated might result from the treaty, especially to the electorate of Hanover.

"As I sought in conversation explanation of this note, Kaunitz told me, very magisterially, that his orders were positive not to enter into any discussion upon the subject; and when amongst other things I said, that it contained no answer to one of the

material points of my communication, viz., the state of the negotiations between France and Austria, he replied that he had particular orders not to enter into any explanation of any kind upon that point.

"Under these circumstances, I thought it expedient to request an audience with the empress.

"Kaunitz answered, that the empress would certainly not refuse an audience, but it was a very useless step, because the answer given was the empress's answer, confirmed and approved by all her ministers, upon due and mature deliberation."

On the 13th May, being the birth-day of the empress, Keith was introduced to her, and observed that the given declarations would appear to his court as a renunciation of the ancient relations. The empress answered, "She could not help it if it did. That it was not she who abandoned the old system, but that it was my court that had abandoned her and that system together, in making the treaty with the king of Prussia. That the account of that treaty had struck her like a fit of apoplexy: that though she had received many accounts from different quarters that such a treaty was in agitation, yet she never could be brought to believe it; but now that it was certain, she considered the old system to exist no longer; and that it was to be excused, in that case, if she endeavoured to secure herself, by taking the measures that should appear to her necessary for that purpose."

To this Keith replied, "That the new treaty by no means destroyed the old system, but had been undertaken in consequence of the disinclination of the court of Vienna to adopt the English plan of defence." The empress answered, "That, without en-

tering into the reasons which might have induced his British majesty to take that measure, she would own freely to me that she and the king of Prussia were incompatible together; and that no consideration could ever make her enter into an alliance where he was a party."

Keith answered, "A resolution of this nature was highly detrimental to her own interest and safety, as it would not only give a just pretence to the king of Prussia, but even laid him, in some measure, under the necessity to secure himself by the ruin of the house of Austria."

The empress, in the same manner, turned off all explanations respecting her relation to France; adding, however, "She could not see why we should be surprised if she should enter into engagements with France, after the example we had given by making a treaty with Prussia." Keith having requested and obtained permission to address her as a private person, some explanation ensued. Maria Theresa said, her present system was absolutely to keep out of war, which she was resolved to do at any rate*, and that all the measures she was taking were with that view.

With respect to the relations with France, she was very far from being French in her disposition, and she owned that court had been her enemy; but that, in the situation she was left in by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, and by the cessions we had obliged her to make, then and before, which had cut off her arms and legs, she had very little more to fear from France, and was unable to exert herself with vigour

* Yet, two months later, she would not give Frederick any clear, satisfactory assurance.

or to purpose(?) on that side; consequently, that she had nothing left but to make the arrangements necessary for saving the little she had left there. Keith defended the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, said the cessions were unavoidable, and England had sacrificed Cape Breton to the benefit of Austria. Keith said, "How could your majesty think to find security by making engagements with the perfidious court of France?" "And why should I not?" said she.

After Keith had developed all the reasons against a union with France, he concluded with saying,—"That it was impossible that the empress and archduchess of Austria could ever humble herself so as to throw herself into the arms of France!" Her majesty answered, with some quickness, "I don't throw myself into the arms of France, but only place myself at her side. Nothing is as yet concluded with this power, neither shall I do anything against England; but there was a necessity to take some arrangement, and I am persuaded that if I do sign, France will keep her word."

When Keith reminded her of the Pragmatic Sanction, and of England's toleration, the queen replied, "France would not have attacked her, if Prussia had not led the way; and that the king of England had come very late to her assistance. That she could not pay much attention to distant provinces, but must confine herself to her hereditary estates, and had only two enemies to fear—the Turks and Prussia. However, with the good understanding that exists between the two empresses, they would show that they were in a condition to defend themselves, and had little to fear from those enemies, powerful as they were."

"It is Kaunitz," says Keith, "and Kaunitz* alone, that is the author of all the mischief; and while the delusion lasts, and he continues in their majesties' confidence, nothing good can happen; and unfortunately there is the greatest likelihood that he will possess their confidence so long, that things will go to destruction in that time, so as to be past the possibility of recovery. The only hope I have is, that as he has, by his pride and insolence, made all the world his enemies (for I may say with truth that he has not one friend, man or woman, either at court or in town), all would rejoice at his overthrow."

CHAPTER XXVI.

Mitchell's audience of Frederick—The King respecting the Russians—The Elector Palatine and the Elector of Cologne—The American War—The Duke of Nivernois—Warlike preparations of Russia—Elizabeth's enmity to Frederick—Frederick's views of the state of Europe—Observations respecting the Treaties of England with Prussia, and of France with Austria—Treaty of England with Russia—Fresh difficulties—Frederick's apprehensions—Bestucheff—Schuwaloff—Catherine and Williams—Woronzow—Venality of the Russian Ministers.

THE new relation, in which England now stood towards Prussia, rendered it necessary to send a new ambassador to Berlin. Mr. Mitchell understood the genius of Frederick II., and was, therefore, more able to agree with him than Lord Hyndford.

The same day on which Keith had the conversation, just related, with Maria Theresa in Vienna, Mr. Mitchell had his first audience with Frederick.

* Another dispatch of the 16th May. Austria, vol. cxcii.

On the 14th May, he sent several dispatches, from which I take the following extracts*:—"In regard to the peace of Germany, the king said, 'Nothing will happen this year, I can answer for it with my head; but I do not pretend to say what may happen the next. I have several plans ready: the king of England may choose which he likes. I will fulfil my engagements with him; and, in case the peace of the empire should be disturbed, in consequence of the conventions that have been talked of, between the house of Austria and France, I will make common cause with the king of England, and will act against both Austria and France. But,' said he, 'are you sure of the Russians?' I replied, 'The king my master thought so.' His Prussian majesty said, 'The king of Great Britain may depend on what I say, but I depend, that what passes between us will be kept secret,' which I promised in the most solemn manner.

"After the king had spoken about the relations between Austria and France, he asked me the second time, if we were absolutely sure of the Russians? I told him, I believed we were, and that the Russian minister, at the court of Vienna, had made the strongest and most friendly representations to the emperor and the empress, upon the subject of the late treaty between his majesty and the king of Great Britain. The king of Prussia observed, 'that these representations might have been made by order of Bestucheff,' who he knew was our friend.

"The king reckons what armies France, Austria, and England can bring to the field†; and that he

* Mitchell papers, vol. i. Dispatch to Lord Holderness.

† Second dispatch of the same day.

could bring an army of 100,000 men, *but still there would be wanting* 30,000 Russians. That, in order to facilitate the coming of the Russians, he proposed that they should embark on board their galleys, in the ports of Livonia and Courland, nearest to their quarters, and sail along the coasts of Prussia and Pomerania. That he would give them quarters in the ports of Pomerania, if they had occasion to land, and they ought to be put on shore at Rostock.

"The king said, 'The Elector Palatine would not be gained from France, but,' he thought, 'the Elector of Cologne might be come at.' He suggested that some Roman Catholic gentleman, without any (official?) character, should be sent, to reside at his court, and get into his favour. That, if this gentleman was *hardi, effronté, et bouffon,* he could not fail of success, and then a little money would be necessary. He did not believe it would be possible to get the Elector to act against the French; but it would be sufficient if he refused them a passage for their troops, and make a great outcry (*qu'il criat beaucoup*). He added, that such a gentleman as he had described, he imagined, might be found among the Scotch or Irish Roman Catholics.

"I told the king, that the subsidy treaty with Bavaria was not renewed. 'Then,' says he, 'the French will have him,' (the Elector.)

"He added: 'The French ministry was a very weak one, and we had little to fear from them, but did well to be upon our guard, because of their superior force.'

"With regard to the war of America, the king said, 'He could not help wondering at the absurdity of both nations, to exhaust their strength and wealth

for an object that did not appear to him to be worth while. That he was persuaded, by next year, both nations would tire of it, and remove the seat of the war into Europe, unless a peace could be made before that time.'

"I suspect, from the doubtful anxiety which the king expresses, in the repeated inquiries he made about the state of our affairs at the court of Russia, that he may have received advice from that country, that they are not in so favourable a way as I had reason to believe they were, when I left England. It was for that reason that I answered firmly, but with reserve, when he urged me again and again upon that head."

This point was certainly of the utmost importance, and on it depended all further conclusions. The king clearly enough foresaw the probability of a transfer of the war, from America to Europe, while he, however, in some measure, took it for granted that the Russians would act from Rostock in concert with him and England. Maria Theresa designated the Empress Elizabeth as her ally against Prussia. How the peace of Germany was to be maintained in both these cases, it was difficult to comprehend. At all events, such an overstrained and confused state of things could not long exist.

According to a second dispatch of Mitchell, of the 27th May *, "The king made new discourses and doubts about the wavering state of the Russian policy, and the secret negotiations of the French at that court.

"Then about the duke of Nivernois' negotiation

* Dispatch of 27th May. Ibid.

at Berlin, the king said, he would freely tell me what his views were by the negotiation with France. That he wanted to prevent the war from becoming general, and had hopes at that time of bringing the two nations together, and to make them to understand one another, and their respective interests, which he thought they had both mistaken. That he was still of the same opinion, and would keep out of the war as long as he could. That it was his principle, that, if Germany was attacked by foreign troops, he would fulfil his engagement, (with England) and would facilitate the coming of 30,000 Russians by sea, to be landed at Rostock or Stettin; 'but,' added he, 'I shall be very sorry to see any foreign troops whatsoever in the empire, and I hope the Russians will not come, unless there be real occasion for them; they will serve as a pledge for the fidelity of the Russian empire, and prevent its being induced to take a part against us.'"

On the 28th of May*, a day after the sending of this dispatch, Holderness informs the ambassador Williams, that (notwithstanding all the representations of England, Spain, Naples, and Silesia against it) Austria had concluded a treaty with France. Everything now depended on keeping Russia in the right course. On the following day, May 29th, Williams writes to Holderness †:—"Troops are marching from all quarters into Livonia. Orders are given to increase the army there to above 140,000 men. Thirty-six regiments of infantry, three of horse, five of Hussars, 20,000 Cossacks, and a proportionate train of artillery. Several of the generals are already gone to Riga."

* Russia, vol. lxiv. † Ibid.

Now, as England had not asked for any assistance, and Russia had declared that the treaty with the king of England bound it only to act against the king of Prussia, his apprehensions were but too well founded.

"The empress's personal enmity against the king of Prussia," continues Williams, on the 5th of June*, "is so undisguised that it breaks out upon every occasion, and any point that is directly levelled against that monarch, is eagerly supported by the Czarina and all her ministers."

Four days after this, Keith wrote from Vienna to Lord Holderness† :—"I hear, from persons who pretend to be well informed, that Austria and Russia are connected together in the strongest manner, and act in concert in everything. Their object is only to deceive England, and lull it to sleep, till all their plans are ripe, and everything prepared. Five days later the ambassador confirms this statement."

On the 7th of June, Frederick II. wrote‡ :—"The whole of this affair turns upon two points. The one is to gain Russia; this is what the king of England proposes to effect. If he succeeds, Germany will remain tranquil, and we shall have nothing to fear. The other is, (supposing that the news which has come from the Hague should be confirmed, and the empress of Russia be induced to renounce her engagements with England) to turn to the Turks and to distribute money among them, to secure a diversion on their part, and, at the same time, for the king of England and myself to make all the augmentations specified in the body of the dispatch, to

* Russia, vol. lxv. † Dispatch of 7th June, Austria, vol. cxcii.
‡ Mitchell papers, vol. i:, intended for Mitchell.

put ourselves in a condition to resist all the enterprizes of our enemy. I believe that there is no time to be lost in doing all this, and that, unless measures are taken beforehand at Constantinople, in case of our own failing at Petersburg, we shall only take our measures when it is too late.

"The best of all would be peace. In case there should be no means to affect it, between this and the end of the year, we must think betimes of means to defend ourselves, and neglect nothing for our mutual preservation; and tell Mr. Mitchell, that the question is not about trifles, but the most important interests of Prussia and England; and that the slightest negligence, in our present measures, may in time cause our mutual ruin."

This last apprehension was perfectly well-founded, if not immediately for Great Britain, yet for Prussia; its existence was at stake, and it was most difficult for it to take the right resolution at the right time. This will clearly appear from the diplomatic correspondence, which is more extensive and important from June to October, than for years before and afterwards.

On the 12th of June Kaunitz informed the English ambassador that a treaty of neutrality and defence had been concluded between Austria and France. That, as the treaty of Westphalia had been taken as the basis, the overthrow of the constitution of the empire was out of the question. The Austrian possessions were guaranteed, and the present war was excluded, in respect to mutual assistance. Keith, among other remarks, observed, "It seems strange that Kaunitz affirmed the quarrels of

* Austria, vol. cxcii.

England did not concern Austria, as the English never considered the quarrels of Austria as indifferent to them."

The day previously (July 11, Holderness wrote to Keith*):—"The treaty of England with Prussia cannot injure Austria, unless it can be called an injury to have prevented her from executing a most unjust attempt (which indeed the court of Vienna never dared to avow) to retake by force from the king of Prussia, that which had been ceded to him in the most solemn manner." This explanation is followed by complaints of the ingratitude of the court of Vienna and of its infatuated ministers.

On the 12th of June Williams writes from St. Petersburg†:—"Bestucheff is ill, but defends the cause of England. The great military preparations that are making will end in nothing; even general Apraxin, who is appointed to command the troops in those quarters (Livonia), who was about a fortnight ago making great preparations for his journey to Riga, is just now going to his country-house near this place, to settle there for this summer." The court of Vienna continues, however, by every method, to endeavour to destroy the good harmony that subsists between England and Russia. In another place he says‡, "The court begins to be tired with that project, and no orders are yet sent, nor will be sent this year, to the Cossacks in the Ukraine."

Notwithstanding all these assurances, Williams writes only three days later to Mitchell§, "By the

* Austria, vol. cxcii. † Mitchell Papers, vol. ix.
‡ Russia, vol. lxv. Letter of 12th June.
§ Mitchell Papers, vol. xxi. Correspondence of Petersburg, Sweden, vol. xcii.

ungrateful efforts of Austria and the secret intrigues of Douglas, the situation of things here (in comparison of last year) is entirely changed, and the Swedes were assured upon their application, that the armament of Russia was not directed against them."

A more explicit and subsequent explanation of these matters is given in a letter from Lord Holderness of the 21st of June, to Keith*. He says:—"You will find in a letter from Williams that, even at the time of exchanging the ratifications, the Russian ministers forced upon him a declaration, explaining the sense of this treaty to be such as his majesty can by no means admit, as it tends to fix the *casus fœderis* singly upon the event of some hostile attempt upon the part of the king of Prussia against his majesty or his allies, in which case (and in which case alone, say the Russian ministers) the succours stipulated by the treaty of the 30th of September, 1755, or the diversion mentioned in different parts of the said treaty, can be required by his majesty."

On the 25th of June, Lord Holderness wrote to Williams†, "The Russian ambassador, Prince Gallitzin, has received orders to persist in explaining the treaty in this restricted sense."

A dispatch of the 22nd of June says‡:—"The king sees that the danger comes nearer, and asks explanations what England will do. Williams had badly negotiated at Petersburg, and the treaty of the king with England set him alone, and in great trouble. Russia is lost; and in this perilous situation his majesty says (though he has no new treaty

* Austria, vol. cxcii. † Russia, vol. lxv.
‡ Dispatch of 22d June, Mitchell Papers, vol. i.

with England) he trusts to the good faith of the king of England, and to the assistance he will give him, to support the engagements he has with England, which alone are the cause of his present danger. But he is very desirous to know immediately, and without loss of time, what assistance he may reckon upon from England in the present juncture, in case he should be attacked by all or any of the powers. The Czarina said to Count Esterhazy, that, if the empress-queen was attacked by Prussia or France, she would assist with all her force.

"The king said*, he wondered why the empress of Russia had so strong an aversion to him; that he had never done a thing to deserve it; that he imputed it to the influence and arts of the court of Vienna."

About the same time the Russians pretended to fear Frederick's armament in Pomerania†; and, in general, there was no want of malicious intrigues to excite prejudice against him. Thus, the Russian ambassador Grosz, at Dresden, related much to his disadvantage; and the representations of the English ambassador, Lord Stormont, availed nothing against him.

On the 9th of July Williams writes from St. Petersburg to Lord Holderness‡:—"The counsels of this court are so fluctuating, and so unable and corrupt are the persons who at present engross Elizabeth's ear§. . . . Orders have been sent to all the Russian ministers to live upon good terms with the French. Bestucheff said, 'Our misfortune

* Dispatch of 9th July, Mitchell Papers, vol. i.

† Dispatch of 4th July, Saxony, vol. lxv.

‡ Mitchell Papers, vol. ix. § A blank in the MS.

is that we have, at present, a young favourite, Count Schuwaloff, at this court, who can talk French, and is fond of the French and their fashions; and he wants to see a French embassy with a large train arrive at this court. His power is so great, that there is sometimes no resisting it.'

"Bestucheff complains*, that the empress gives him only 7000 rubles a year, which is not enough to make him independent. If the king of England will give him a pension of 2500*l.*, he will, in future, serve and be wholly devoted to him." This desire was granted on the 8th of August.

"The entire attachment of the great duchess Catherine to the king of England†, the probability of her soon mounting the throne, and the certainty of her acting perfectly right when she is on the throne, makes every word she says of consequence. She is very uneasy about the reports of this court entering into measures with France, and of a French ambassador's coming here. She offered to do everything I could suggest to prevent all this. I drew her attention to the circumstance of the danger which would hence accrue to her and her husband, for without French assistance, her adversaries, the Schuwaloffs, were not powerful enough to disturb the succession to the throne.

"She thanked me ten times over for these hints: she said she saw the danger, and that she would animate the great duke to do the utmost in this affair; that she could do a great deal more if she had money, for that here nothing can be done without it; that she was forced to keep even the em-

* Second Dispatch of 9th July, Russia, vol. lxv.

† Third Dispatch of 9th July, ibid.

press's chambermaids in pay; that she had nobody to address herself to upon such an occasion; but that, if the king would graciously and generously be pleased to lend her a sum of money, she would give his majesty her note for it, and would repay it to him the moment she had it in her power to do so. And, at the same time, I might give her word of honour to the king, that every farthing of it should be applied to what she hoped was their common service; and she desired I would be answerable to his majesty for her manner of thinking and acting. She asks 20,000 ducats." This sum was granted her on the 8th of August*.

"What is most surprising is, that it is certain that the resolution of making steps to be upon better terms with the court of Versailles was taken here long before any treaty was thought of between England and Prussia, and all purely to satisfy young Count Schuwaloff, who is resolved to have a French ambassador at this court. Bestucheff knew nothing of this step, or only acted so far as the empress expressly commanded him.

"A deputy from Woronzow told me†, that everything that was passed must be forgot, but things were not so bad but that they might easily be mended; that I had never addressed myself to the vice-chancellor in the proper manner; that the house he was building in this town had been begun with English money; that he had not been able to carry it on for the last five or six years; and that it must be English money that must finish it. I answered, that the vice-chancellor had hitherto conducted him-

* Fourth Dispatch of 9th July, Russia, vol. lxv.

† Fifth Dispatch of 9th July, ibid.

self in such a manner that he must give some proof of his sincerity before I could trust him enough to enter into any treaty with him. To this his messenger replied, that, if I did not give money, other people would, and that, to his knowledge, Mr. Douglas had given a great deal to several persons already. To this I answered, that I never could nor would say any more than I had said. On the following day this messenger returned again, and told me the vice-chancellor would be very glad to have a private conference with me. I replied, I hoped that Woronzow had something to propose, because I would not till then propose anything to him."

Such were the petty considerations that prevailed in the treatment of the affairs of Europe at St. Petersburg, and so contemptible were the persons and the means employed in conducting them. Before we return to the centre, and to the decision of the great questions now pending, we will consider the state of affairs in the second northern kingdom, Sweden.

CHAPTER XXVII.

State of Parties in Sweden—The Diet—The situation of the King—Conspiracy of Horn and Brahe—The situation and treatment of the Queen—Consequences of the Constitution—The decline of Sweden.

On the 27th of November, 1753, a person, whose name does not appear, gives the following account (in French) of the state of parties in Sweden to the

English ministry *:—"To give the court a just idea of the nature of the two parties which now divide the Swedish nation, the following particulars may be stated in a few words:—The greater part of the king's party is composed of persons who are adverse to the French system; the remainder, who are far inferior in numbers, are all persons formerly attached to that system, and, perhaps, still remain so in their hearts. These latter, under the pretext of supporting the legal prerogatives of the king, have joined the party of that prince; but, to say the truth, only in the hope of avenging themselves on some senators; and of more easily attaining, under the protection of the royal power, offices, money, and favours. If it depended on these last, the king would have more power; but the French system would likewise subsist. Some, however, must be excepted who have sincerely changed their system. However this be, those of the king's party, who are so only out of pique and from interested motives, may perhaps find themselves under the necessity of following the stream of their party, having perhaps gone too far to retreat.

"The majority of the party of the senate are all persons attached to the French system, who, under the pretext of maintaining the form of government and liberty, leave no stone unturned, as well in foreign countries as in Sweden itself, to make the king and his prerogatives suspected, by which they aim only at supporting, or even increasing, their party to such a degree, that the French system in Sweden, and their own persons, may have nothing to fear. Some of this party really desire the mainte-

* State-paper Office, Sweden, vol. xc.

nance of the form of government, and only wait for a favourable opportunity to throw off the French yoke. Others, in considerable numbers, who are in their hearts opposed to the French system, belong to this party, either through real apprehension that the king may arrogate to himself and acquire too much power, or because they think it impossible ever to obtain a change of system through the king, which may be more easily effected by means of the senate, and of their partizans in the nation and in the diet.

"This disgust with the French system, fear of the king, or rather of the queen *, hope, uncertainty, ill-humour, passion, difference of views and dispositions, embroil matters and occasion frequent changes of party. At present the parties nearly balance each other; the reasons, or rather the pretexts, for the division, are of such a nature, that they may long maintain the fermentation, and make it general in the country. Fear for the excess of the king's power is opposed to the dread of the aristocracy.

"The king's party seems to predominate in the provinces, and among the priests and peasants. But this preponderance is not so great but that the French and their gold may triumph at the next diet, for which time the French collect and reserve all their forces. It is true that they do not speak so loudly and openly against the king in the provinces as in Stockholm. Nevertheless, what I have above

* In a Dispatch of the 14th June, 1754, vol. xci., it is stated that the queen was not prematurely brought to bed in consequence of a journey to Drottingholm, but because she was unduly excited in consequence of an officer's having sent a present to one of her maids of honour. This princess in this, as in other respects, continues to betray her Prussian character—haughty, restless, violent.

said is quite true, unless there should be a revolution or rebellion in the country."

In another account of the 30th of September, 1755, we find *, "Though it cannot yet be certainly stated on which side the majority will be in this new diet, it is but too probable that the party of the senate will triumph, in consequence of the intrigues and bribery of France, as well as of the little support which the king and his friends meet with abroad. The priests and the peasants, indeed, are not in favour of the senate, but because, according to an established abuse, almost all important matters are discussed and decided in the secret committees, the former cannot hinder the latter from doing what it pleases; for as only the first three estates take part in the committee, nothing more is necessary than to secure the nobility and the citizens. Yet there remains a means of contending with a majority of these two estates; namely, by the adherents of the king insisting that every change or interpretation which has reference to the constitution, shall be brought before the diet. Then, at least, two estates would oppose the other two estates, and dangerous innovations be prevented."

On the 20th of January, 1756, the same person relates, that the party of the senate and of France has triumphed in every point †. "The marshal, the secret committee, the high dignitaries, are all appointed according to their wishes; the senate completed by the addition of four persons on whom the French ambassador can depend; the dispute between the latter and the king decided against his majesty; his revenue reduced almost to nothing; the speaker

* Sweden, vol. xcii. † Ibid.

of the peasants gained; that estate quite intimidated; the majority of the clergy also gained; in short, all the four estates devoted and subject to the senate, the court of Versailles, and the French ambassador."

All this would certainly have led to important consequences in the north, had not the whole policy of France been entirely changed at this time, and assimilated with that of Russia.

In the dispatch of the 23rd of March, 1756, it is said, "The estates have resolved that the king must always assent to the majority of the senators, and that he must not delay or obstruct what has been resolved by this majority. Nay, the estates have further decided, that the will of the king means nothing more than the opinion and decision of the estates, or, when they are not assembled, the majority of the senate, and that wherever the constitution speaks of the assent of the king, this expression is a mere polite form. His assent is taken for granted when the estates or the majority of the senate have decided. There is a talk of taking from the king even those rights which the constitution assigns to him, under the pretext that these rights are no parts of the constitution, but depend entirely on the good-will of the estates. The king of Sweden will therefore be degraded to a mere external representative of majesty, without being able to propose, regulate, delay, or order anything. The constitution, which is really monarchical, aristocratic, and democratic, degenerates into a conflicting, unstable mixture of aristocracy and democracy.

"Many persons speak of the inconvenience of declaring the assent of the king necessary in certain

cases, saying, that this would be causing a collision calculated to stop the progress of business. As if such a collision were contrary to the fundamental laws, and did not take place, when, for instance, two estates were opposed to two others, as if it were not in some cases salutary, and as if a good collision were not preferable to a bad decision.

"It seems that they entirely forgot that the constitution speaks of the rights of the king, the estates, the senate,—and that the compact ought to be kept as sacred on the one part as on the other. The king has given an advantage over himself, which, however, can be used only through French intrigues and chicane, by constantly affirming, in all his disputes with the estates and with the senate, that he had nothing against the persons; by frequently alleging only a part of the argument which he might have derived from the fundamental laws of the empire; nay, by sometimes omitting to give any reasons at all. The estates, or rather, the adherents of France in the senate, have taken occasion from this to place the king in opposition to the constitution, and to carry on their plans, which were amply supported by French money. The senators have also mutually granted each other large sums of money."

Such an unpropitious state of things induced * Counts Horn and Brahe to conspire with others, to bring about a change in the constitution, and an augmentation of the royal authority †. "Their plans were discovered by a corporal Schedvin, who is highly extolled for it, and both were arrested in the night of the 22nd of June. The king and queen, says

* Dispatch of 8th June, 1756.

† Dispatches of 25th and 26th June, and 9th July, ibid.

the writer, declared that they knew nothing of all these plans, and detested them. The king and his party are therefore entirely crushed, and the prevailing party and its system fully secured, and every one who does not belong to it exterminated, or, at least, rendered incapable of undertaking anything. Many persons, and of the principal families, will thus end their lives upon the scaffold, for having, in the despair to which they were reduced, rashly had recourse to violent measures."

Another report of the 27th of June states*:—"Yesterday Count Brahe was executed. He died like a great man, and with more firmness than all the others. In him we lose one of the first noblemen of the kingdom, a man of understanding, honour, and courage, who promised much, the greatest enemy of the French system, and of the present unhappy bondage of Sweden.

"When Horn had already laid his head upon the block he rose and asked for half an hour's delay, because, in the inquietude which possessed him, he could not risk his soul. The commander of the detachment of guards, and the priests, told him that as he was well prepared for death the moment before the execution, it could not be delayed. Hereupon he composed himself, and received two strokes of the hatchet.

Brahe and Horn personally are universally regretted; but their crime is detested by everybody. The first is, indeed, accused of arrogance and haughtiness; but he probably would not have gone so far, had he not been provoked by all kinds of neglect. His final object was only to save the state,

* Dispatch of 27th July. Sweden, vol. xcii.

the genuine constitution, and honest men. Had his plan succeeded he would have been regarded as the deliverer of his country; as it failed, he is looked upon as a traitor to it.

"It is now under consideration whether the queen* shall acknowledge, by a declaration on oath, that she is only the first subject of the king, or whether she shall be sent away or confined in a fortress? The king himself submits to all demands, and is a mere cypher."

Thus far my much abridged communications respecting Sweden. To many they may perhaps appear already too long, and unnecessarily to interrupt the thread of the principal events. But does it not deserve serious meditation, that unbridled love of war in the kings, and covetous ambition of the aristocracy, had so reduced a kingdom, which a hundred years before had a preponderating voice in the affairs of Europe, that it is now impelled backwards and forwards, the sport of foreign intrigues, and at last, when the adversaries, Russia and France, agree, must take a resolution, contrary to its own interests, giving the former margrave of Brandenburg less occasion for apprehension than for ridicule.

* Dispatches of 6th August and 14th of September, 1756.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Lord Holderness respecting the state of Europe—Armaments of Austria—Pacific sentiments of Frederick—Behaviour of France—Increasing anxiety of Frederick—Russian intelligence with Austria—Question respecting Peace or War—Admonitions of England—Frederick's claims in Vienna—Unsatisfactory Answers of Austria—Letter of Frederick to Klinggröf—Position and wishes of England—Dispatches from Prussia.

On the 9th of July, 1756, Lord Holderness writes to Mitchell*, England acted on the supposition that the continental peace would not be interrupted this year. But should the king of Prussia (as he expressed in his last audience) have reason to fear an attack of the two empresses (in reliance upon France), or rather in case this fear should be verified, England was ready to conclude a treaty with Prussia for their mutual defence.

"But it may be more advisable to avoid taking any step which would increase the ill-grounded jealousy of the Russian court, the gaining of which is of such mutual consequence to the kings of England and Prussia; and, whatever appearance there may be on the contrary, the king of England is far from despairing to bring the Czarina to a right way of thinking. Other engines are at work, besides those that publicly appear on the stage.

"The knowledge the king of Prussia has of the little secret intrigues constantly carried on at St. Petersburg, will be sufficient to show a prince of his penetration that it is more from intrigues than from

* Mitchell Papers, vol. i.

political principles that we have anything to fear from Russia. Artifices like these must be got the better of by schemes of the like nature, in which the chancellor is as well versed as perhaps any of his adversaries. He has, moreover, superior abilities in business, and a real ascendant over the Czarina.

"Therefore, the conclusion of a treaty may be delayed; but England will vigorously support Prussia in case of an attack upon his dominions. Notwithstanding the parade of the Austrian or Russian camps, his majesty is inclined to think the king of Prussia was grounded in his *former* opinion—that nothing of a hostile nature will be attempted in Germany during the course of *this year*; but upon the intelligence his Prussian majesty has received, give these declarations.

"From Spain there is nothing to fear. It is become now the arbiter of all the Southern courts, an influence which she has obtained, and continues to support, only by remaining independent from France. M. de Carvajal's administration laid the ground to this fortunate turn of the Spanish politics; and, after his death, Mr. Wall has pursued, with more warmth and spirit, the system of friendship towards England, and the Marquis Ensenada's disgrace, soon afterwards followed by that of the Confessor Ravago, established this doctrine at the court of Spain."

On the same day (9th July *), Mr. Keith wrote from Vienna to Lord Holderness:—"The military preparations are carrying on here with great diligence. The regiments of horse, now at 800, have got orders to complete a thousand, against the 1st

* Mitchell Papers, vol. ix.; and Austria, vol. cxcii.

October." After Keith has spoken of preparations, marches, &c., he continues:—"But this court declare they have no hostile intentions, at *least*, that they will not be the *aggressors*, but that the motions made by the Prussian troops, the camps which his Prussian majesty intends to form in their neighbourhood, obliges them to put themselves in a posture of readiness and defence; and, I must add, that several persons, who pretend to be well informed, and who certainly wish for the continuance of peace, seem to think this court is sincere in those declarations.

"I think, however, it is to be feared that, when so great armies are so near one another, with a good deal of animosity and bad humour subsisting between the two courts, some unlucky accident or other may happen, which may kindle a fire that will not be easily extinguished.

"There is a great want of money at Vienna for carrying on the war; it is even with difficulty that the people are able even to pay their present taxes."

Three days after, 14th July, Keith adds*:—"The military preparations are carried on in this country with more diligence than ever. Troops arrive from Hungary and other places; there are daily conferences between the ministers about recruits, money, &c.; but they say, that certainly they will not be the *aggressors;* but I imagine, at the same time, that they would not be sorry if his Prussian majesty gave the first blow, in order to put them in the *casus fœderis* of demanding the assistance of France and Russia.

"They are discussing plans of finance†. The States of the different provinces are to lend certain

* Mitchell papers, vol. ix. † Dispatch of 21st July, ibid.

sums at an interest of five per cent., payable out of the income of the provinces."

At the same time, Mitchell writes to Lord Stormont:—"You will not be surprised that I can write nothing certain of our intentions here. They are kept absolutely in the king's breast; only I know he is prepared for whatever may happen, though he most sincerely wishes for peace*."

Anxious respecting the increasing dangers, Lord Holderness writes to Mitchell, 13th July:—"Every step of the king of Prussia relative to the army is interpreted at Vienna as taken with a hostile intent, and to be a consequence of the treaty with England†. Unjust as these surmises are, they may possibly have an effect upon some powers who have not yet taken their party in the present new and critical situation of affairs. His majesty gives, therefore, his most serious advice to the king of Prussia, to be particularly cautious of taking any hostile resolution, and though the king cannot but approve every measure of precaution, it may be of use to take them without parade or ostentation. The king of Prussia need not be told, that every appearance of a warlike nature will be represented by the court of Vienna in the most odious light in every court of Europe, and will serve them as a handle to draw the Catholic princes into their views. In St. Petersburg it was calumniously affirmed that king Frederick had a plan to attack Russia: he may, therefore, show his inclination to form an alliance with England and Russia."

At the same time the French court most erro-

* Mitchell papers, vol. i. Letter of 10th July.

† Mitchell papers, vol. ix.

neously maintained that * it was the principal plan of England, that the king of Prussia should attack Austria. Valory, the ambassador at Berlin, was, therefore, commanded to declare that, in this case, France would aid the empress-queen conformably to the treaty. On this, the Prussian minister Podewils asked Valory, whether the French court was certain respecting the intentions of the court of Vienna against the Prussians, and whether the king of France would guarantee to them the preservation of peace? Valory writes to the French minister:—"You see, sir, that my answer could be only dubious and unmeaning." Valory also confesses, in another place†, that the French court had never given any answer to that important question. The more decided, however, was Valory in declaring the French demands; on which account Frederick said to Mitchell, "I do not choose that these gentlemen should speak to me as to the Dutch, and tell me what treaty I shall fulfil or not."

Thus then we have come to an epoch, which decided for many years the fate of Prussia,—nay, of Europe; yet even to the present day there is a wide difference of opinion respecting the justice or injustice, the wisdom or the folly, of the conduct of the several powers, especially of Frederick II. If we consider the sources that have hitherto been accessible,—especially Herzberg's rich collection of documents,—the impartial observer may come to the following conclusions:—

1. Frederick has not proved, and could not prove, that a formal offensive alliance against him had been

* Valory, Mémoires, vol. ii. p. 101. † Mem. p. 310.
‡ Mitchell, vol. i., letter of 30th July.

concluded between Austria, Russia, and Saxony. He was wrong in laying particular stress upon it at the beginning, because those powers might deny it, and draw attention from their unquestionably hostile intentions.

2. Austria cherished the natural wish to reconquer Silesia, and to provoke Frederick to attack, because then it would have the inestimable advantage of being able to make use of the aid of Russia and France to attain its ends.

3. This danger was by no means concealed from the king. If, therefore, he drew on himself the appearance of being the aggressor, he either acted in a very inconsiderate and injudicious manner, or he was in a state of necessary self-defence, and impressed with the conviction that he could not escape entire ruin, except by anticipating the plans of his enemies.

Without repeating what is already known in confirmation of these assertions, a chronological review of English dispatches, and of Frederick's own statements, will contribute to place the last questions in particular, in a clearer light.

On the 23rd of July, Mitchell writes*:—"The king of Prussia thinks that Russia is absolutely lost for us. The intentions of the court of Vienna have manifested themselves beyond all thought by the great preparations made in Bohemia and in Moravia, and by the unguarded declarations that some of their ministers and generals have made. The king said he wished for peace, and it was his interest to do so."

In a more detailed dispatch of Mitchell about the

* Mitchell Papers. vol. i.

same time, he says* :—"The march of the imperial troops into Bohemia alarmed the king of Prussia's officers and ministers in Silesia, and it is probable that the accounts they sent to the king were aggravated and exaggerated. The king concluded there was no salvation but in preventive measures, hoping, if he succeeded, this formidable conspiracy might dissipate in smoke, if the party principally concerned would be so far reduced as not to be in a condition to support the war next year; that then the whole burthen must fall upon their allies and associates, which he did not think they were inclined to bear.

"In this temper I found the king; at the same time he declared to me (as he had often done before) that he wished for nothing so much as peace,—that he wanted to keep what he had, but had no view of making new acquisitions.

"I remember on this occasion, amongst other pieces of intelligence which his Prussian majesty showed me, there were some very strong, and as I thought exaggerated, accounts from Silesia of an intended encampment upon a tongue of land in Bohemia, which was nearly surrounded by Silesian territories. Upon which information, combined with others, the king concluded that the court of Vienna certainly intended to attack him. I took the liberty to represent that, from such encampments, the intention of the Austrians could not certainly be concluded while they remained upon their own territory; that perhaps their design might be to provoke his majesty to strike the first blow, and thereby to entitle themselves to call for the succour from Russia

* Without date. Ibid. vol. lxvii. p. 29. The dispatch was probably written something later, but about this time.

and France in case Maria Theresa was attacked in her possessions. He answered me abruptly and with some emotion, and looking me full in the face, 'Now, sir, what do you see in my face? do you think that my nose is made to receive fillips? By Heaven, I would not put up with them!'

"I replied, that nobody, I believed, would be rash enough to affront him; that if they did, his character was too well known in Europe to leave any doubt in what manner it would be resented; and that, of all the great qualities he possessed, I never heard patience and forbearance reckoned among the number. He took this freedom well, and laughed: he persisted, however, in his view of the case, though I repeated my arguments to the contrary.

"At length I proposed that, before taking any further measures, he might demand a declaration whether Austria meant to attack him. He did not seem to relish this proposal, and began to speak with great warmth of the insolence and haughtiness of the court of Vienna; that making such a demand would only be making things worse, and exposing himself to receive an arrogant and insulting answer. I urged that the more haughty the answer was, so much the better; not that I thought he should bear it, but only that he should convince Europe of his own pacific intentions, and the hostile views of Austria. He heard all with patience, but replied with warmth, 'No; that will not do. It may make things worse. You do not know those people; that would render them more proud, and I will not yield to them.'

"So he spoke in the forenoon; in the evening,

after the burletta, the king declared he had thought of the matter, and would follow my advice. 'But,' said he, 'I tell you beforehand, that I expect no good from all this, and that I shall not yield to those people.'

Hereupon the king caused a friendly and polite request to be made at Vienna for a declaration and information respecting the military preparations; and Maria Theresa gave designedly an obscure and unsatisfactory answer. Count Fleming, the Saxon ambassador, in a dispatch to Count Bruhl, of the 28th of July, says*, "Count Kaunitz said to me, 'The king of Prussia has a double object, which we here wish to prevent. In the first place, to obtain discussions and explanations which might lead to the interruption of measures, the active prosecution of which we thought to be necessary; secondly, to carry the matter further, to lead to new proposals and positive engagements. I therefore was of opinion the answer must be of such a nature that it should wholly evade the king's question, should give no room for further explanation, be at once firm and polite, but at the same time not be susceptible of any interpretation favourable or unfavourable. He had therefore thought it would be the best if the empress contented herself with merely saying, that in the great crisis in which Europe now was, her duty and the honour of her crown required that she should adopt adequate measures for her own security, as well as for the security of her friends and allies.' Soon afterwards Count Fleming added:—'It was wished that the king should impoverish himself by continued armaments, and be consumed by a

* Receuil de Herzberg, vol. i. p. 60.

slow fire; or that, in order to prevent this, he should take a rash resolution; and, it appears to me, that is precisely what they expect.'"

After this explanatory digression we will return to the British accounts. On the 27th July, Mitchell writes,—"The Prussian ambassador Klinggräf received at Vienna the following answer from the hands of Maria Theresa*: That affairs being now at a crisis, she had thought fit to take measures for her own safety and that of her allies, and which would not tend to the prejudice of anybody." Three days later, Mitchell adds †,—"The king will lay open to her imperial majesty the intelligence he has of a treaty entered into between her majesty and the court of Russia to attack him at the same time; and the discovery he has made that the execution of this scheme is only delayed till the next year, because the Russians were not ready; that notwithstanding this, if her imperial majesty will give him assurances that she will not attack him, neither this nor next year, he will be satisfied, and will give reciprocal assurances to her imperial majesty on his part."

In a dispatch of Keith from Vienna of the 28th of July, he says ‡,—"Klinggräf received instructions to desire, in the most civil and obliging form, an explanation on the preparations for war. Kaunitz laid the blame upon the Prussians. Klinggräf replied, he was in a condition to show that the information they had received of that kind was ill-founded; and he was going to enter into particulars, but Kaunitz prevented him by breaking off the conversation abruptly."

* Mitchell Papers, vol. lxvii. † Ibid. Dispatch of 30th July.
‡ Austria, vol. cxcii.

On the 4th of August Keith writes from Vienna*: —The preparations for war here increase. At the beginning of September there will be in Bohemia and Moravia (besides the hussars and 11 or 12,000 Warasdines) 60,000 regular troops.

"When king Frederick," continues Mitchell in his above-mentioned narrative †, "received the first answer from Vienna, he was not satisfied, and asked my opinion. I said I wished it had been more explicit, but I was glad to find there was nothing offensive in it. He then put in my hand an extract of a letter dated, but the place from whence it came not mentioned, and desired me to read it carefully. This extract gives an account of a conversation that an intimate friend of Count Kaunitz had with him concerning the answer the empress was to give to the king of Prussia's demands. As I read I could not help smiling, which the king perceiving, asked me why I smiled? I endeavoured to shift giving an answer; but he insisting, I was obliged to own that I smiled because I thought the intelligence too good and too minute. That I was acquainted with Count Kaunitz, and believed him too wise to trust any friend whatever with such a secret. After taking Count Kaunitz' character, which I gave him fairly, his majesty was pleased to say, 'I own your observation is just; but this intelligence comes from a good hand, and may be depended upon.'"

Mitchell learnt afterwards that the intelligence came from Count Fleming, and it is doubtless that of which we have just given an extract. It is not to be supposed that Fleming wrote that account that it might fall into the king's hands and irritate him; at

* Austria, vol. cxcii. † Mitchell Papers, vol. lxvii. p. 28.

least the conclusion that it was intended invidiously to provoke him, would have done away with the premises. Frederick doubtless knew the whole of the contents.

On the 2nd of August* Frederick wrote to his ambassador Klinggräf, that this answer is not clear and sufficient; that he had proofs that Russia and Austria intended to attack him, and had only delayed it because the Russians were not ready. He continues,—"I think I have a right to demand from the empress a formal and categorical declaration, consisting of an assurance, either verbal or in writing, that she has no intention of attacking me this year or the next. Whether this declaration be made in writing, or verbally, in presence of the ambassadors of France and England, that is the same to me, and depends on the pleasure of the empress. I must know whether we are at peace or war. I make the empress herself the arbiter. If her intentions are pure, this is the moment to manifest them. But if an answer is given me in the style of an oracle, uncertain and inconclusive, the empress will have herself to blame for all the consequences of the manner in which she will tacitly confirm the dangerous projects which she has formed with Russia against me, and I call to Heaven to witness that I am innocent of the misfortunes that will ensue."

Such was the state of things when Lord Holderness wrote to Mitchell on the 6th of August†:—"If the king of Prussia shows himself active for England against France, he may make himself as popular in this country as ever the house of Austria was. But this is the touchstone. France is our

* Mitchell Papers, vol. i. † Ibid. vol. xxix.

point: he must show a resolution to assist us against our natural enemy—the rest will come of course."

This manner of considering the matter was, to say the least, very partial; that Frederick should undertake war against France merely for the sake of England, should act merely for England, was making him and his kingdom subordinate to foreign objects, in a manner which may be asked, but cannot be granted. To this it must be added, that any attack upon France necessarily included a war with Austria, and that the king of course had Silesia more at heart than Hanover.

Two other letters of Holderness are more to the purpose*, in which he says:—"The enemies of England will not bring the Czarina to join headlong in the projects of Vienna and Versailles, unless the king of Prussia should by any attack on the empress-queen strengthen Bestucheff and our enemies, and oblige them to take part under the specious pretext of engagements they are under to the house of Austria. I have endeavoured to set forth to you the dangerous consequences of any hostile attempt on the part of the king of Prussia, unless absolutely forced thereto by the conduct of the court of Vienna. The king hopes therefore his Prussian majesty will precipitate nothing, as a sudden resolution might produce the most dangerous consequences, which may be avoided, or at least diminished, by a little patience.

"There is weight and solidity in Frederick's intentions of being beforehand with his enemies, when once he is persuaded it is their intention to com-

* The 6th of August, to Mitchell. Mitchell Papers, vol. ix.

mence hostilities; but, at the same time, his Prussian majesty cannot but see, that by being the aggressor, he forces the empress of Russia to take a part with the house of Austria, which might *perhaps* by temporizing be avoided."

On the 11th of August Holderness repeats*:—"Whatever intelligence of a joint attack of Russia and Austria is come to the king of Prussia, the king of England cannot be convinced that those advices are well founded. Bestucheff certainly knows nothing of them; and though his credit is sunk with the empress, such a step would not be resolved upon without his knowledge. The king of Prussia will consider whether the advantage he proposes to himself by preventing his enemies are adequate to the certain loss of Russia."

Mr. Williams, in his dispatches from Russia of the 14th of August, says†,—"Appearances are good, but nobody can answer for the result. Delays and indolence are the characteristics of this court‡. Bestucheff's interest is certainly prevalent at present. If he acts up to his professions all will be well; if not, he will keep us in suspense, which is his favourite way of acting." And yet Williams writes, only a week later, on the 24th of August,—"The Russians will neither take money on the ground of the treaty concluded with England, nor do anything. They say they will soon make new proposals, and have appointed an ambassador to Paris §."

Thus Russia was already quite separated from England, and had gone over to its enemies, before

* The 6th of August, to Mitchell. Mitchell Papers, vol. ix.
† Prussia, vol. lxv. ‡ Dispatch of 17th August. Ibid.
§ Ibid. Dispatch of 28th August.

Frederick II. had undertaken any hostile measure against Austria. In case a continental war should anywhere break out, there could, in truth, remain no doubt of the conduct of Elizabeth, and the part she would take. We shall bring below further proofs of this.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Letter of Frederick II. to Mitchell respecting the necessity of Preventive Measures—Holderness respecting the hostile Intentions of the Court of Vienna—Resolution of Frederick to commence the War—March of the Prussians.

It is above all things necessary to know what Frederick II. thought of the situation and prospect of affairs. An autograph letter of his own to Mitchell*, of the 9th of August, 1556, gives the most interesting information on this subject. "From the accounts which we receive, it appears that France means to attempt this year an invasion of the three kingdoms. It is to be hoped that the good measures which the king of England has taken will defeat this expedition. It is known that the squadron of Bailly de Conflans consists of thirteen ships of the line, which is to be joined by twelve from the Brest fleet, making in all twenty-five ships of the line. As we know that the English Channel fleet is much superior to that of the French, that the best admirals command it, that they are aware of the designs of their enemies, and that they may ruin them, we believe that we may be easy on this head.

* Mitchell Papers, vol. i., letter lxv.

"However, the ministry is intreated not to neglect the information which has been given them of secret correspondence, which the Marshal de Belleisle has in England, and which, if it is such as the French give out, might dreadfully embarrass the king of England. By land, affairs are in a no less critical state. Prussia has communicated to the court of London the terms upon which it stands with the empress-queen. According to the best information from Vienna, a rupture seems inevitable. Much will depend on the answer of the court of Vienna, which will decide on peace or war, and which will be faithfully communicated to his Britannic majesty, as well as everything that may further occur.

"It may be foreseen that the troubles in Germany, and perhaps the failure of the French expedition against England, will oblige France next year to transfer the war to the Continent, which must excite the serious attention of the courts of London and Berlin, that they may not be taken unprepared on that side.

"It will, doubtless, be remembered that it was proposed to make an alliance with the republic of Holland, and to encourage it at the same time to place itself in a more respectable situation than it is in at present. Since, then, these two courts are equally interested in this subject, the most effectual means of succeeding would, doubtless, be to inform the ministers of the two crowns of their design to contract a defensive alliance with the republic, to induce it to make an addition of 30,000 troops to its army, and with respect to England, to require the assistance of a number of men-of-war. That these ministers should not be restricted with respect to

the means which they may think fit to employ for this purpose, but that it would be for them to concert with well-disposed Dutchmen, to arrange their plan according to their opinion, and to carry it into execution in concert. It is to be presumed that persons who see with their own eyes, who know the mode of thinking of the nation in which they live, and make use of the advice of well-disposed persons as a compass to steer by, will infallibly succeed in their designs.

"We have learnt by an emissary, who has returned from Lombardy, that the Austrians and the French are extremely attentive to the movements of the king of Sardinia; whence it may be believed that, if that prince would merely spread a report of some augmentation of his army (even though he did not make any), this would keep the Austrian troops in Lombardy, and the French troops in Dauphiné and Provence, in check, and would produce this advantage, that there would be less reason to fear for Germany.

"It appears, from all accounts which come from Petersburg, that the great chancellor will perhaps have sufficient courage to hinder the conclusion of a treaty between her majesty and France; but it seems certain that they will interfere in the war which the queen of Hungary intends to make upon Prussia. In this case, England can expect no assistance whatever from Russia. It will even learn that Russia makes war upon the allies of England; whence it may be inferred that, if the subsidies intended for that court were distributed at Brunswick, Cassel, Gotha, and Darmstadt, England would, in the pre-

sent crisis, derive a more real advantage for the defence of Hanover.

"A calculation has been made, by which it appears evident (the augmentation and alliance with Holland being concluded) that the king of England will be able to dispose of an army of nearly 80,000 men in the empire. These efforts, it is true, will be at the expense of the English government; but would the French do less? It is certain that they dread a war by land, on the one hand, on account of the immense expense of their fleet, and this army, the maintenance of which would be very costly; on the other hand, for reasons which influence the court and the interest of certain private persons, who fear that, if a war were to take place on the Continent, the king of France would again put himself at the head of his armies.

"But notwithstanding the reasons just alleged, it is not doubtful that if France should suffer a great check by sea, it will resume its designs upon the electorate of Hanover, to which it is excited by the court of Vienna, which, desiring troubles in Germany, will spare nothing to engage France as far as it can. It may be remembered on this occasion, that, in the last memorial, mention was made of the Ottoman Porte; that, as it appears that the delicacy of his Britannic majesty would be hurt by the insinuation which Mr. Porter might make at Constantinople against the court of St. Petersburg, it seems that another way might be taken, which would lead to the same end. This would be to represent to the grand vizier all the danger which threatens the Ottoman empire from the strict alliance between

the court of Vienna and that of France, and, in case war breaks out in Germany, it might be added, that this would be the moment for the Turks to profit by this event, to secure themselves from the fatal consequences which that alliance might have for them. It were to be wished that after all the attention and all the friendly proceedings of the court of London towards that of St. Petersburg, it might make some progress there, but it seems that it will be lost labour.

"One reflection may be added, submitting the whole to the superior judgment of his Britannic majesty: seeing that the new triumvirate formed in Europe, far from preserving any consideration for its own allies, proceeds direct to the execution of its dangerous projects, it is but just that England and Prussia, instead of suffering themselves to be amused by them, should labour with equal diligence to oppose them. The old systems no longer exist. It would be running after a shadow to attempt to restore them. The engagements which now unite these powers, who dictate the fate of kings, are too strong; those powers which desire to oppose their tyranny, and the presumptuous plans which they meditate, have no means left but to form a new system on their part, that a new balance of power may be established in Europe, and that force may repress violence, and defeat designs which are dangerous to all those who love their country, their liberty, and the good of all Europe."

In the meantime, Frederick's renewed demands had arrived at Vienna. The Austrians, however (in order to gain time), demanded that these should be

communicated in writing*, to which Klinggräf did not think himself authorized, but asked for instructions from Berlin.

On the 14th August, Frederick writes to Mitchell†: —"You see I have nothing for it but to prevent my enemies, who would make use of the time between this and the next spring to augment the conspiracy formed against me, and to reduce me to an utter impossibility of resisting this attempt."

On the 17th he writes‡:—"You will see by the subjoined note all the wicked projects of my enemies, and the indispensable necessity under which I am of preventing them: to loose this Gordian knot, there is no means but to cut it with the sword."

On the 18th of August Mr. Keith writes from Vienna§:—"Even the garrison of this capital has marched, and the whole army is in motion."

On the following day Frederick writes to Mitchell‖: —"To answer you, sir, on the different points on which you have spoken to me to-day, I must tell you,—

"1st. That affairs are so advanced with the queen of Hungary that her answer must be waited for, and if it does not prove to be entirely clear and satisfactory, I cannot, without sacrificing the safety of my states, and even my honour, leave her time to execute all her black designs; and that, knowing very well that this step may bring upon me a war with Russia, I have prepared for it the more, as I have long expected that I should one day be obliged to come to

* Dispatch from Vienna, 11th August. Austria, vol. cxcii.
† Mitchell Papers, vol. xl. ‡ Ibid.
§ Austria, vol. cxcii. ‖ Mitchell Papers, vol. ii.

this. I call Heaven to witness, that I know of no other means to extricate myself from so difficult a situation than by preventing it.

"2d. With respect to the succour which the king of England requires from me, I must tell you, that if I had troops enough to make head alone against all Europe, I should have sent an army to the country of Cleves, to defend it against the invasion of my enemies; but that, having need of all my forces to maintain my ground against the two empresses, I am obliged to expose my provinces on the Rhine to the chance of events; that, however, I will do my utmost to prove to the king of England that I am his friend. For this purpose, in case the French should march troops towards the Rhine, he may dispose of a corps of 11,000 men which I have in Pomerania, and which, in eighteen or twenty days, may be in Hanover, passing by Tangermünde and the country of Zell; whereas the French will have more than forty days' march from Normandy to the Weser. That these troops may, in case of need, be employed for the defence of Hanover till the end of February, it being well understood that the king of England will supply them with bread, meat, and forage, during the time that they will have to stay (in case of the march of the French) in his dominions. But that, after the month of February, I should be obliged to make them march for Prussia, that they may be there by the middle of May, unless (contrary to all expectation) Russia declares itself neuter. I sacrifice my own interest at this moment for the king of England; but it is impossible for me to go any further. If that prince chooses to make a peace advantageous to him, I

shall be charmed at it, provided he does not exclude his allies. My enemies force me to make war; I shall bless the day which shall put an end to it."

In the same spirit Frederick said to Mitchell*:—"He that gave the first blow was not to be considered as the aggressor, but he that made that blow necessary and unavoidable."

On the same day that the king said this to Mitchell (20th August), Lord Holderness† wrote to him:—"Prussia should not attack, because such a step would make Elizabeth immediately decide in favour of Maria Theresa." "The king of England," continues Holderness, "still entertains the opinion that this attempt must not be ventured upon till all other means of securing the king of Prussia have failed, and that no other resource remains."

Lord Holderness expresses himself more plainly and more at length in a letter to Sir C. Williams of the same date‡. He acknowledges, in the first place, that for certain occasions and circumstances it cannot be expected that the king of Prussia, who is the best prepared, should wait till he is attacked. He says, "His majesty the king of England has reason to know that the Austrian ministers are at this very time using their utmost endeavours to persuade the court of France to take this opportunity of making an attempt on the king's dominions in Germany. It is further proved by the diplomatic correspondence, as well as other sources, that even then (that is, in the last summer) the court of Vienna had nothing so much at heart as an opportunity of attacking the king of Prussia. All their views tended

* Mitchell Papers, vol. ii., letter of 20th August.
† Ibid., vol. ix. ‡ Ibid., letter of 20th August.

to that, their favourite point, and it was because his majesty declined to enter into their schemes, that he was denied that support and assistance which he had, from so many reasons, a right to expect*; and finding that his majesty declined entering into measures so unjust and so dangerous, their next application was to the court of France, who, less scrupulous as to the means of attaining their ends, have entered into, or at least connived at, the gross breach of faith which they have so long been meditating.

"In circumstances like these, and with so much certainty of the nature of the politics of the court of Vienna, is it wonderful to find the king of Prussia willing to prevent the impending danger? or can any resolution he might take in such circumstances, and under such provocations, be justly considered as a commencement of hostilities? We have, however, dissuaded him from attacking.

"But should the court of Vienna persist in refusing such explanations as might quiet his Prussian majesty's alarms, and should that prince be forced in consequence to take those measures which his own safety seems to call for, the king cannot look upon such a step as giving the house of Austria a right to reclaim the assistance of her allies.

"His majesty will still continue to inculcate to his Prussian majesty the necessity of moderation. But the king cannot, in justice to himself and his ally, push that advice so far as to expose him to the danger of an attack, which he has drawn upon himself, by entering into measures with the king."

* Valory confesses the same, vol. ii. p. 150.

In another place * Lord Holderness writes to Mr. Williams:—"The king of Prussia, though ready to repulse or prevent the attack which seems to be meditating against him, has, in pursuance of his majesty's advice, thought proper to ask an explanation from the empress queen, which has been demanded in the most decent and moderate manner, but has hitherto produced nothing but a dry unsatisfactory answer.

"The king of Prussia has, therefore, addressed new questions to the court of Vienna, and declared to us that he will readily maintain peace if it can be done with any hopes of safety to himself. But if, on the contrary, it should appear from the hostile preparations of his enemies, that they are resolved to act openly as such, and that they should refuse a satisfactory explanation of their intentions in amassing so great a force, it cannot be expected that that prince should wait for an open overt act to convince him of their bad intention; but that, on the contrary, he will make use of being better prepared than his adversaries, and endeavour to remove the seat of war from his own territories: and if he should be forced to take a resolution of that kind, his majesty does not see how he can justly be called the aggressor."

In another letter from Lord Holderness to Mr. Titley, ambassador in Holland, he says:—"The proposals which the English court made to that of Austria in the spring of 1755, respecting a defensive alliance, were rejected †. When Mr. Keith pressed to

* Letter of the 20th August. Russia, vol. lxv.

† Letter of the 4th January, 1757. Mitchell Papers, vol. ii.

know what count Kaunitz thought as to the means of forming a defensive system, since what the king had proposed was rejected, Kaunitz answered with great warmth and emotion,—'Good God, by attacking the king of Prussia!' Thus ended the negotiations with the court of Vienna."

On the 24th of August Frederick writes to Mitchell*:—"In case the answer which I expect every hour from Vienna should be of such a nature that I can be satisfied, and not be obliged to have recourse to extremities, we will deliberate on the sending a Prussian ambassador to Petersburg."

On the same day Mitchell writes:—"The courier from Vienna is not yet arrived†; the impatience with which he is expected is not to be described. The soldiers, flushed with the memory of former success, set out with a thorough persuasion of victory. And, indeed, it is surprising to see with what alacrity and cheerfulness they have returned from their harvest-work upon the first notion that was given them."

Meantime‡ the court of Vienna gave, on the 21st of August, an answer, in which the existence of an offensive alliance against Prussia is denied; but not a word is said of Frederick's principal question, whether Maria Theresa thinks to attack him in this or the following year.

On the 27th of August the king said to Mr. Mitchell, "He was so much disposed to peace, that any declaration would have satisfied him provided he had found in it an assurance for his security.

* Mitchell Papers, vol. xl. † Ibid., vol. ii.
‡ Ibid. And a dispatch from Vienna of 21st August, vol. cxcii.

That he had read this, the last answer, over several times, but could find nothing of that sort in it*. Though completely prepared for war, he is willing to be quiet, if he can but be secure. And, indeed, this is perfectly agreeable to the whole conversation, that even with success he cannot be a gainer by war; that therefore both interest and inclination would lead him to wish for peace, even after he had taken the field."

On the 28th of August Mitchell writes†:—"As the answer of Vienna denied solely the treaty between Austria and Russia, and gave no security, the king set in motion his army, with the intention, however, to withdraw his troops, if the empress will give the assurance required.

"This morning, between four and five o'clock, I took leave of the king of Prussia. He went immediately upon the parade, mounted on horseback, and after a very short exercise of his troops, put himself at their head, and marched directly for Belitz. The men are cheerful and in high spirits."

* Mitchell Papers, vol. ii. Dispatch of 30th August.

† Mitchell Papers, vol. i.

CHAPTER XXX.

Reasons of the War—Situation and Complaints of Saxony—Frederick II. to Augustus King of Poland—Dispatches from Russia—Negotiations with Bestucheff—Bribery—Apraxin—Catherine—Passionate Sentiments of Elizabeth—Sweden against Prussia—Holderness against the court of Vienna—Battle of Lowositz—Iwan III.—The Poles.—Madame de Pompadour—Her enmity to Frederick—Russia's earlier Plans against Prussia—Peter III. and Catherine to Williams—Parties in Russia.

The more I compare the old accounts with those which have been lately brought to light, the more firmly am I persuaded that the maritime war between England and France continuing, a continental war could not be avoided. France desired it, in order to make England feel its superiority here; Austria to conquer Silesia; and Russia to gratify its passion. The king of Prussia alone undoubtedly wished for peace, for (as he very clearly perceived) there was no prospect whatever of advantage to him under present circumstances. The state of things was, on the other hand, so unexpectedly and extraordinarily advantageous to Austria (by its own prudence and the folly of others), that it had every reason to entertain the hope of recovering what it had lost. If therefore the court of Vienna gave unsatisfactory answers to the easily-answered questions which the king, as the threatened and weaker party, very naturally made,—this was not accident or the effect of pride, but of deliberate resolution, and of the well-formed calculation that it would thus throw on Frederick the odium of being the aggressor. Had the intentions of the court of Vienna been dif-

ferent, it would have cost but an explicit word, and war was avoided.

The fact that this word was not (honourably) pronounced, was, in truth, a declaration of war; and, taking everything into account, we cannot but feel that it was perfectly natural if Frederick took the second answer (or no answer) in this light. Mere waiting would have brought Russian armies into Prussia, the French to Westphalia, and the king would not have gained, by neglecting the right moment, the smallest compassion, or any assistance in Europe. At all events he is, and always will be, the hero of that memorable war; and Austria, also, deserves the praise of firmness and perseverance; whereas France and Russia, in their conduct towards Prussia, acted only an unworthy, and Saxony and the German empire, very pitiful characters in the great tragedy.

Frederick again declared, that as soon as Austria would give a satisfactory declaration *, he would retire, disarm, and remove all grounds for suspicion. But there was not the slightest probability that Austria, which now saw itself at the goal of its riches, would sacrifice, by such a declaration, all the advantages it had gained.

The court of Saxony first made loud complaints, with reason, as the miseries of war threatened it; but without reason, as Saxony, in a war between Austria and Prussia, cannot possibly remain wholly neutral and exempt from the consequences; but that, when reduced to the necessity of making a choice, it would join Austria and Russia, is evident

* Dispatch of 4th September. Austria, vol. cxciii.

from the negotiations *, and might also be inferred from its conduct during the second Silesian war.

When king Augustus required the evacuation of Saxony, Frederick answered him, on the 5th of September, from Lomnitz †:—"Whatever inclination I have to oblige your majesty, it is impossible for me to evacuate your dominions, for a hundred military reasons, which it would be tedious to enumerate, and which, however, prevent me from doing so; the principal being the necessity of securing my supply of provisions. I should be glad if the road from Bohemia passed through Thuringia, that I might not be under the necessity of molesting your majesty's estates; but as military reasons oblige me to make use of the Elbe, I cannot, without performing miracles, choose any other means than those which I at present employ. I assure your majesty that I make all imaginable haste; but it is impossible for the troops to fly. With respect to what I have stated to your majesty of your ministers' bad intentions and proceedings, very different to the spirit of the treaty of Dresden, I am able to prove it, and would do so immediately, did not considerations, which I am obliged to regard, hinder me. However, this will never make me forget what I owe to crowned heads, to a prince, my neighbour, who is only misled, and for whom, as well as all his royal family, I shall preserve upon all occasions, even were he my most cruel enemy, the highest respect and the most perfect esteem."

Several dispatches from Mr. Williams, written from Petersburg, maintain—

* Dispatches of 16th and 26th June, and 21st July. Saxony, vol. lxv.
† Mitchell papers, vol. lxvi.

1st. That unless Frederick had made the attack, Russia would certainly have remained neutral, and had, besides, not concluded an offensive alliance with Austria*.

2nd. That Elizabeth had resolved to make war on the king, but that her army was not yet in a state of readiness, neither were the nobility by any means unanimous in their opinions respecting the offensive measures.

In order to gain Bestucheff, King Frederick had 100,000 dollars offered to him †.

On the 11th and 14th of September, Williams writes‡:—"I most heartily wish the king of Prussia had never alleged to the court of Vienna that there was an offensive alliance between Austria and Russia; for I am thoroughly convinced that there is no such thing. I am fully convinced that his Prussian majesty was maliciously imposed upon, and that the Russian princess would never have assisted the house of Austria in an offensive war against Prussia. I cannot conceal from you that I am extremely concerned that the king of Prussia was deceived in his intelligence about the offensive treaty; for his attack on Maria Theresa will frustrate all my designs at this court.

"The king's enemies at this court are very numerous and vigorously resolute, and are daily talking against him. Orders are gone to all their troops to hold themselves in readiness."

The empress declines every mediation, and says§,

* Mitchell papers, vol. xxi. Dispatches of Williams of 4th, 7th, and 21st September. Russia, vol. lxvi.

† Mitchell's dispatches of 2nd and 4th September, vols. ii. and iv.

‡ Mitchell papers, vol. xxi. Russia, vol. lxvi.

§ Dispatch of 18th September. Russia, vol. lxvi.

"She would leave the quarrel, which was entirely begun on the king of Prussia's side, to be made up between those two powers; though, at the same time, she was resolved to fulfil all her engagements with the empress-queen."

"I endeavoured," says Williams on the 28th of September, "to gain the great chancellor Bestucheff for Prussia*. I found him, for the two or three first times, inflexible; but the broader my hints grew about the sum, the more he yielded. At last he gave me his hand, and said, 'From this hour I am his friend; but I do not see how I can serve him at present. Had I known this two months ago much might have been done; but he has begun a war, and nothing can hinder the empress to assist Austria. Everything is already determined. It is true, he has taken us a little unprepared, and you know that our motions are slow. I cannot promise to do anything at present, because it is not in my power; but you may assure the king of Prussia that whatever Mardefeld might have done against me, I have entirely forgot it, and am now ready, when the occasion shall offer, through more than words, to show that I am willing to do service to his Prussian majesty.' He concluded, that he hoped this change and declaration of his might be kept as the greatest secret.

"For other persons also I must ask for money. I hope the king of Prussia will send me the 10,000 ducats as soon as possible.

"The Russians have little money, and not ten good officers of all ranks in their army. They go

* Dispatch of 18th September. Russia, vol. lxvi.

into the war out of necessity, and a point of passion more than honour. I hope the victories of the king of Prussia will restore peace with Russia; for it is most certainly true, that Prussia, in alliance with England, is the most natural ally for Russia, but in alliance with France, the most dangerous and formidable enemy.

"Apraxin is to command the Russian army: he is lately made field-marshal. He is the laziest of mankind, and a rank coward; for he was grossly abused the other day, and almost kicked, by the hetman of the Cossacks, without resenting it."—— "Apraxin," he says, in another place *, "is a very corpulent man; lazy, luxurious, and certainly not brave. He has never yet seen an army of any enemy, nor ever served but in Münnich's Turkish campaigns. I know he is sick of his command; and they already begin to find here that the marching of so large an army is not so easily done as talked of. All foreign officers who, within the last few years, have been dismissed, have gradually taken leave.

"The great duchess Catherine disapproves of the conduct of the court of Vienna towards England, and thinks that an alliance between England, Russia, Holland, Prussia, and some other German princes, can alone save Europe. The Russians decline to accept the latest English subsidies, and declare nothing about the defence of Hanover against the French. The empress was yet willing to employ her good offices with France, to prevent them from attacking Hanover."

Opinion at Stockholm was even more passionate,

* Dispatch of 28th September. Russia, vol. lxvi.

and even absurd, than in St. Petersburg. "There is nothing so bad" (dispatch of 24th September *) "but what is said here of the king of Prussia and his expedition. All are exasperated with him, and would almost wish to see him annihilated. His guilt is heightened by his being the ally of England; and the people triumph in anticipation that Russia will declare against him."

When news was received in England of Frederick's final resolutions, Lord Holderness wrote, on the 11th of September†, to Lord Stormont:—"The politics of the court of Vienna were to endeavour to force the king of Prussia to the necessity of doing himself justice by his arms. The king of Poland might avoid the consequences by a proper conduct towards the king of Prussia. But whatever inconveniences may arise to him, they are only to be ascribed to the ill-timed haughtiness of the court of Vienna. If their intentions had really been pacific, the king (of England) sees no reason why they might not have declared them to be such, as his majesty cannot conceive the dignity of any sovereign to be lessened by an avowal to the powers principally concerned of those views, which they industriously endeavoured to insinuate to other princes, to be the only motives of their present armaments. They would make the world believe they only brought armies to the frontiers of the king of Prussia in consequence of the preparations he was making in those parts of the world. If that was true, why should they hesitate at giving the king of Prussia the satisfaction he has so much reason to expect?

* Sweden, vol. xcii. † Mitchell papers, vol. ix. Russia, vol. lxv.

"The alliance of England with Prussia essentially aimed at peace*; but nothing could calm the affected suspicion of Vienna, or put a stop to their cupidity of recovering forcibly what was ceded. Hence its armaments, the treaty of Versailles, the undigested counsels of Kaunitz, &c. Necessity has forced the king of Prussia to seek for safety. He does not make the attack; he defends himself."

Meantime Frederick II. had besieged Dresden. On the 1st of October he gained the battle of Lowositz, and on the 15th he forced the Saxon army to surrender. The queen of Poland, therefore, sent one of the lords of the bed-chamber to St. Petersburg, to make complaints† of the personal treatment she had received, and to excite the pity, as well as the anger, of the empress. With similar views it was stated in the Russian councils, that if Russia declared war against him, Frederick would come thither with all his army and replace Iwan III. on the throne‡. When the empress heard this she said, "The day such a manifest plan appears, I will order young Iwan's head to be cut off."

The following information of the 9th of October §, is, however, in direct opposition to the foregoing:— "M. Durand, the French minister at Warsaw, went on the 26th inst. (N.S.) to the prime minister of Poland, and declared to him that the French king could not but be most extremely alarmed if the news that was everywhere published should prove true, that a Russian army was soon to march through Po-

* Holderness to Stormont. Saxony, vol. lxvi.
† Williams's dispatch of 9th October. Russia, vol. lxvi.
‡ Dispatch of 30th October, ibid.
§ Mitchell Papers, vol. xxi. Petersburg Correspondence.

land to assist Austria, and that in that case his most Christian majesty desired that the republic would give all possible opposition to such a march. The Russians are very much astonished at this declaration. There is a very great party at this court, who wishes for any occasion or excuse to prevent Russia to enter into this war."

Perhaps the hopes which the Prussian minister expressed to Mitchell might have had some connexion with this*. "They (the ministers) flattered themselves that things would not come to extremities with France, as they could not persuade themselves there ever could be any cordiality between France and Austria." But historical and political considerations lost all their weight and influence from the caprices and interests of a mistress. The Prussian ambassador, Baron Kniphausen (says Valory†), is the only one who, by command of his master, does not see Madame Pompadour, while the empress-queen writes her the most flattering letters. Mitchell further relates‡,—"In 1754, a proposal was made to the king of Prussia to yield the principality of Neufchatel to Madame Pompadour for life, she to be created a princess and to have the revenues, and the king to receive in lieu of them a gratification from France equal to them. This he rejected with disdain; and it is perhaps one reason of her hatred to him."

After the battle of Lowositz, the Austrian ambassador in St. Petersburg complains loudly of the low-

* Mitchell to Newcastle, 4th of November. Mitchell Papers, vol. xxviii. † Valory, vol. i. p. 320.

‡ Mitchell's Letter of 20th October, 1757, vol. lxiv.

§ Dispatches of 19th and 20th October. Mitchell Papers, vol. xvi.

ness of the Russian succours. "Displeased at this," Bestucheff says to Williams, "instead of blaming the Russian ministers for not having the troops in readiness, he (Bestucheff) had it in his power to make the Austrian ministers own, that it was entirely their own fault that 40,000 Russians had not marched into Saxony two months ago.

"Having heard thus much, I desired the great chancellor to explain himself further, which he did by telling me, that in the month of June last, the Saxon minister had informed this court that they were fully convinced that the king of Prussia had designs of entering the electorate, and that they reclaimed the 12,000 men which Russia is obliged by treaty to furnish them in case they are attacked. Upon the receipt of this news and this demand, there was a council held, in which it was resolved not only immediately to send the 12,000 men required, but to offer the elector of Saxony 40,000 men, in case he would find forage and quarters for the additional 28,000, and these resolutions were already signed by the empress, and by her orders communicated to Count Esterhazy, who was thereupon called to a conference, and being acquainted with the empress's intentions, he opposed the sending any such succours to Saxony, and the vice-chancellor seconded the opposition so effectually, that the scheme was laid aside.

"Apraxin's departure is again put off, and the great chancellor owned freely to us that he has contrived this delay, and will contrive many more, to serve those who are his friends. If the king of Prussia, when he makes peace with Saxony, would show some civilities to the queen of Poland, and

make some slight excuse for what necessity has forced him to do, it would have a good effect here. Apraxin himself has been persuaded to furnish all the delays in his power, and to defer his journey, which even as yet is not fixed, nor at present much talked of."

From this remarkable account it appears, in confirmation of what I have above asserted:—1st. Russia was so hostilely disposed towards Prussia, that on the bare possibility of a future attack on the part of the king, it wished to send a large army to Saxony.

2nd. Austria's desire for war was necessarily increased by this certainty; and if it objected to the march of the Russians, or rather to a premature declaration of their intention to march, this was most probably done, because its own preparations for war were not yet sufficiently advanced, and Frederick might at once have begun the war with success. Above all things it prudently wished to remove from itself the odium of being the aggressor.

"The king of Prussia," continues Williams, "may depend upon it*, that the great chancellor shall never touch one farthing of his money, till the essential services I require from him are actually performed. The great duke and duchess are in favour of Prussia, and complain of the intrigues of the all-powerful Schuwaloffs in favour of France. On the 9th of November the great duchess† wrote to me: 'I this day received a messenger from the Schuwaloffs to tell me how angry (sorry?) they are to hear that the new alliance between Prussia and France is displeas-

* Dispatch of 11th November. Mitchell Papers, vol. xxi.
† Dispatch of 9th November. Russia, vol. lxvi.

ing to the great duke and me. They call it their system, and think it a good one. They offer me to become entirely mine, to put me on the best footing with the empress, and to procure me everything that can be agreeable to me during her lifetime, if I will promise them my future protection, and adopt and protect their system of politics.' My answer was, that as far as I meddled with politics, I entirely disapproved of their new system, that I had always been for the English alliance, and against the French, though my opinion in those affairs had not much weight. Yet I would be sincere enough with them to assure them that the great duke would not only never adopt that system, but whenever it was in his power would severely punish the author of it. You are blamed for your partiality to the king of Prussia. It is not I that blame you, because we do now, and hope we shall always, think alike."

When the great duke was going to speak in the council against the union with France, and the treaty of Versailles *, the empress said, with some warmth, what had been done was by her orders, and she would not have them disputed; upon which the great duke said that he then had nothing left to do but to obey and be silent.

* Dispatch of 25th December. Russia, vol. lxvi.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Frederick's bad position—Letters to Mitchell—Complaints respecting Parties in England—Activity of Frederick—Inactivity of England—The Army in Lower Saxony—Ferdinand of Brunswick—The Prince of Prussia—Additional Letters of Frederick to Mitchell—Poniatowski in Petersburg—The Great Duchess Catherine—Apraxin.

FREDERICK, by his prompt attack, had gained Saxony, made the Saxon army prisoners, and defeated the Austrians at Lowositz. But he was unable to maintain his ground in Bohemia; and the miseries of war were felt, notwithstanding every precaution, even in the Prussian camp. Accordingly, Mitchell, who accompanied the king, writes on the 4th of November from Sedlitz*:—"The Prussian camp is no place of pleasure. Neither convenience nor luxury dwells here; you are well provided with everything if you bring it along with you. I find I must increase my equipage or starve; all my family are like spectres. It is true I am fed at the king's table, because he desired me to leave my equipage at Dresden."

The prospects for the following year were, however, much more gloomy, and England by no means did so much as was expected. For this reason Lord Holderness himself was afraid that Frederick would become uneasy on account of the internal fermentation and parties in England. "Tell him" (says Lord Holderness to Mitchell on the 3rd of November†) "what you have seen, and what you know of men and

* Mitchell Papers, vol. xxviii. † Ibid. vol. xxix.

manners in this country, but do not let him take any alarm at our wild, inconsiderate, precipitate way of acting. We are not squabbling about measures, but about men. Our alliance with him must and will be supported by all sides."

Yet Frederick said to Mitchell *:—"Besides the general crisis of Europe, the existence of my house is in question. I have reason to be a little uneasy at not having received an answer from England. I have Austria, France, and perhaps Russia, upon my hands, and England does not move. If," added the king, "the empress of Russia would die, or be quiet, I fear nothing from my enemies." After the return of his ambassador from Paris, he became more uneasy †, and all that Mitchell could say to excuse England's delay made no impression.

Accordingly he wrote to Mitchell ‡:—"I am very sorry, my dear Mr. Mitchell, to hear of the divisions which have broken out in your English government. Good God! it seems to me, that at the present moment, every man who has at heart the interests of his nation, and those of Europe, ought to lay aside all personal interest, to think only of an interest paramount to all others—that of maintaining the protestant cause and the liberty of Europe.

"I confess that I have learnt, with the most lively grief, the dissensions in your government. Is it possible that so many men, who however have a regard for the interests of the country, can give the advantage to the eternal enemies of their government by

* Mitchell's Letter of 9th December. Mitchell Papers, vol. xxviii.

† Letter of 9th December. Ibid. vol. iii.

‡ Written with his own hand about this time, though it is not dated. Mitchell Papers, vol. xl.

intestine divisions? How can the king of England and the nation adopt good measures against their enemies? I find, in the nation itself, persons who, though hostile to the French, render them the greatest services, by hindering the state from taking measures in time against the enterprizes of our common enemies.

"For heaven's sake, let patriotism revive among your countrymen, and let them look at things on a grand scale, and not through the microscope of personal interest. For my part, I think at the present moment only of Europe: I have opposed to me only the duumvirate which is dangerous to the liberties of England, as well as to those of Germany, and especially to the protestant cause. I see the winter approaching, and with it the interval of truce in which the inclemency of the season suspends the madness of men. I think that this precious moment should not be suffered to escape without taking on all hands, both by sea and land, the measures which are calculated to resist the powerful efforts which the houses of Austria and Bourbon will make against us.

"I have many things to propose to you, which I withhold till your internal storms are allayed. I am, perhaps, like the Abbé St. Pierre, who dreamt about the happiness of Europe; but I do not know to whom I should propose my dreams. A preliminary is the restoration of tranquillity at London: and I believe that all well-disposed persons will labour to bring it about. Let people dispute about personal interests when they have nothing better to do,—well and good,—but at present, my dear Mr. Mitchell, to dispute about offices when liberty is at stake!

think all parties ought to unite against the common enemy, and leave such wretched disputes to a more convenient season.

"I speak to you as a citizen of Europe, who has much at heart the good of his allies and the independence of his country,—who hates tyranny from whatever quarter it comes, and desires only the good of Europe. I wish that all your countrymen were as sensible and as good citizens as you, and we should together be a match for all the conspiracies which ambitious minds might form against the tranquillity of Europe. Adieu, dear Mitchell."

For his consolation, Lord Holderness wrote to Mitchell*:—"Our great outlines seem settled. All ranks and denominations are convinced of the utility, nay, necessity, of preserving the closest union of measures with his Prussian majesty, who is now become the idol of all ranks."

Mitchell, in his dispatches, speaks with equal praise of the king†. Thus, in a letter of the 25th December, he mentions "the activity of Frederick to gain the courts, principally the Turks, against the Russians. His minister at Constantinople is furnished with a credit for upwards of 60,000*l.* General Branicki, Brühl's enemy, opposes the march of the Russians through Poland. The Russian ministers will not own that they take money‡, and therefore are glad to cover it with any pretext. I have communicated part of your (Williams) letter to the king of Prussia. He is never discouraged; he thinks we ought not to despair; and he imputes the sudden

* Letter of 7th December, 1756. Mitchell Papers, vol. xxix.
† Mitchell Papers, vol. iii.
‡ Letter of 26th December. Ibid.

change in the Russian ministry to the Austrian money that has been distributed among them. So soon as that is squandered away, he thinks you ought to return to the charge."

"The king of Prussia" (he writes on another occasion *) "is uneasy at the insufficient answers and measures of England. When I consider what he has at stake, and the dangers to which he is exposed, I admire his patience, tranquillity, and magnanimity. He said to me, 'If the king's army for the defence of Germany was ready, and magazines formed, I should be in no pain about the rest. You will see that France and Austria will alter their language so soon as they know that measures are concerted between the king and me.' He thinks the plan of operations is not yet settled at Vienna and Paris.

"The question then arose who was to command the English and German army in Saxony†? King Frederick said, 'That Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick is a very brave and a good officer; but I must be free with you. I don't think him equal to such a command; he wants a decided spirit‡. I would venture to recommend and to answer for the prince of Prussia, if he was not my brother. He has seen much, and has taken thorough pains in our profession, and I think him in every way qualified for that, or even a greater, command. I will have the king of England absolutely free in the choice of this general, and I still am of opinion that Prince *Louis* of Brunswick is the fittest person to command the

* Letter of 29th December. Mitchell Papers, vol. iii.

† Letter of 13th December. Ibid.

‡ Il n'a pas l'esprit décisif.

army. I would prefer him to either of the two we have been talking of.'"

In an earlier dispatch* Mitchell had said of the prince royal of Prussia, "He is an excellent officer, vigilant, cautious, and active, and possessed of every quality to fit him for the command of an army."

All these speeches and consultations did not, however, materially further the matter, on which account Mitchell writes to Holderness† on the 2nd January, 1757:—"The king of Prussia said to me, that he feared no assistance was to be expected from his allies. He was resolved to do the best he could by himself. I must not conceal from your lordship that this very long delay has, I fear, raised such a diffidence in the king of Prussia's mind, that nothing but the most cordial and vigorous resolution, accompanied with immediate execution, will be able to efface. If that should not be the case, I need not tell your lordship what self-preservation must suggest to his Prussian majesty. He is making the greatest efforts possible, and stretching every nerve‡. The number of men he will have in the field for the next campain, including the army in Prussia, will amount to 168,000."

"The king," continues Mitchell on the 15th of January§, "left Berlin last Wednesday morning, in as good health and spirits as ever I saw him in. He is making the utmost efforts, and though he does much, he never appears busy."

Great cares, however, were at that time pressing

* Dispatch of 20th November. Ibid.

† Mitchell Papers, vol. iii.

‡ Ibid. Dispatch of 8th January, 1757. § Ibid.

upon this intrepid monarch; for example, the timidity of the Hanoverian ministers, who wished to give him up, and effect a neutrality for Hanover. "It would," he writes, "be a black and unworthy plot* to sacrifice me to the rage of my enemies, the greater part of whom I have drawn round me, because I made an alliance with England to secure the tranquillity of Hanover."

On the 17th of February the king wrote with his own hand to Mitchell†:—"The king of England saw the snare which the Austrians laid for him, and he has generously refused the deceitful neutrality which they offered him. I now only fear that there will be too much delay in assembling this army of observation, which, in my opinion, cannot be advanced to Lippstadt too soon. In a word, the crisis of affairs is terrible, but I don't despair; and provided the Hanoverians cross the sea betimes, we shall overcome our enemies with honour."

In another letter of Frederick to Mitchell he says‡:—"As a very singular piece of news has been communicated to me, which, from the grossness of its expressions, and the black calumnies which it contains, has no precedent, I have not hesitated to tell it to you; were it but for the rarity of the thing, and to prove to you how far the ferocity of the Russian ministers can go, and how many lies and calumnies the Austrian and Saxon courts have impudently made them believe."

Conformably with the above Mitchell says:—

* Mitchell Papers, vol. xl. Dispatch of 9th February.

† Ibid.

‡ Of the 22d February, from Dresden; not written by his own hand. Ibid.

"Sir C. Williams writes from St. Petersburg*, that the lies and calumnies, transmitted by every post from the courts of Vienna, Dresden, and Warsaw, have moved the court of Russia to a sad fury against the king of Prussia. At Petersburg, everything that is laughed at elsewhere is believed without examination. The court of Petersburg is a weak and corrupted court."

At the beginning of 1757, Stanislaus Poniatowski arrived at St. Petersburg as Polish plenipotentiary, though Austria and France protested against his being sent†. But he had been already nominated, and his powerful family "declared loudly that his character is not to be suspected, and that they will answer for his fidelity." "No one," writes Williams, "is on a better footing with Bestucheff than he is, for *reasons* which I shall tell the king when I have the honour to cast myself at his royal feet."

These reasons, which could only be verbally communicated, doubtless referred to the relation of Poniatowski to the great duchess. "She detests the French," says Williams, "and the great duke still more." Williams had opened a very useful correspondence between the latter and the king of Prussia.

"General Apraxin," says another dispatch, "is, or at least pretends to be, entirely devoted to the great duchess‡. He is no soldier, and has a very indifferent opinion of the army he commands; and

* Dispatches of 15th and 22d January and 8th February. Mitchell Papers, vol. iii.

† Dispatches of 25th December, 1756, 4th January and 22d March, 1757. Russia, vol. lxvi. lxvii.

‡ Dispatch of 8th January, 1757. Mitchell Papers, vol. iii.

it is believed he does not wish to meet the Prussians in the field. Apraxin is, besides, very extravagant and very needy, notwithstanding the great bounties bestowed on him by his mistress. From these circumstances the king of Prussia thinks it may be worth while, in the present conjuncture, to give him a sum of money, in order to delay the march of the troops, which a commander-in-chief can easily find pretences so to do. The great duchess must be the person employed, if she will undertake it.

"Apraxin has sent an aide-de-camp to St. Petersburg, to fetch his twelve suits of clothes out of his wardrobe*, which looks as if he wished to make his campaign this summer amongst the ladies of Riga; for though he is one of the biggest and most clumsy men that ever you saw, he is as great a coxcomb in his dress as Count Brühl himself."

CHAPTER XXXII.

The Prussians and Austrians in Saxony—Pitt on Frederick II.—The study of Frederick—The Battle of Prague—The Battle of Kollin—Frederick's relation of the same—His renewed exertions—Relation to England.

THE occupation of Saxony drew down on the king, as is well known, many reproaches; but on the other hand it gave him great advantages, nay, as has been observed, it was absolutely necessary for his preservation, and for carrying on the war. Respecting the conduct of the Prussians in Saxony, and the treat-

*. Dispatch of Williams, 22d March. Mitchell Papers, vol. xxi.

ment of the country, Mitchell writes, on the 26th of February, 1757*:—

"There is certainly unavoidable distress, but the most exact discipline is observed, and punctual payments made to the soldiers, who pay for everything they consume. The Saxons say, from 20,000 Austrians they should have suffered more. Some even go further, and say the country will be enriched with the money spent by the Prussian troops.

"No new tax has been laid on the land in Saxony. They only pay to the king of Prussia what they should have paid to the king of Poland, and his Prussian majesty has, in many articles, lowered the duties of excise and customs for the ease of that unhappy people. The recruiting of the troops is, indeed, a hardship; but it was executed in the most gentle manner, the States being applied to for that purpose; and it must be looked on as a necessary evil attending war. What has occasioned the greatest clamour is the stop of all payments on the civil establishment since the Prussians entered Saxony; but that was occasioned by Count Brühl's sweeping away all the specie that was to be found in the public treasury, after having confounded their accounts in such a manner as will make it difficult, if not impossible, ever to settle them; and his Prussian majesty did not think himself obliged to pay, with his own money, the public debts of Saxony, far less to make good the rapines and plunderings of Count Brühl.

"Madame d'Ogilvie†, grande maitresse of the queen of Poland, under the ingenious pretext of re-

* Mitchell papers, vol. iii. † Ibid. Dispatch of 27th March.

ceiving black puddings from Prague, has carried on a correspondence, which the hungry curiosity of the black Hussars has now put a stop to.

"Even here at Berlin the French party began to show its head, and England was talked of as the most perfidious ally*, that had at first drawn the king of Prussia into the war, and then left him, single and unassisted, to struggle with the united forces of the three great powers in Europe. Since the unanimous resolutions of parliament, this policy has been done away with, and the king thanks Pitt for his speech of the 18th of February."

On the 31st of March, 1757, Pitt writes to Mitchell†:—"The infinite condescension and grateful goodness of his Prussian majesty towards me I feel as I ought, and consequently can express but very inadequately the most grateful sentiments of veneration and zeal for a prince, who stands, the unshaken bulwark of Europe, against the most powerful and malicious confederacy that ever yet has threatened the independence of mankind."

Meantime Frederick had made every preparation for the new campaign, and Mitchell writes on the 7th of April:—"The Prussian springs are so wisely and so exactly adjusted, that they may all be played off at once. In this situation I consider the peculiar advantage‡ the king of Prussia has, of animating and commanding, in the same instant of time, as many different armies as he pleases to form of the troops, with a greater probability of having his orders punctually executed than, perhaps, any minister or general ever had. The pains the king has taken, in his

* Dispatch of 5th March. † Mitchell papers, vol. xxx.
‡ Ibid., vol. xxviii.

leisure hours during the winter, in studying the projects of Turenne, Eugene, and Marlborough (whom he considers as masters in the art of war), fill me with the assurance, that his project has been formed after mature deliberation. Nobody knows his secrets. He executes before it is known that he has deliberated*.

"I mention but one thing more, which gives me great confidence in the king of Prussia. I have seen with admiration the firmness and steadiness of mind with which he receives disagreeable news, and bears the greatest disappointments. He is never disconcerted or discouraged, and thinks of resources immediately, and his armies believe themselves invincible as long as he is with them."

On the 4th of May, two days before the battle of Prague, Mitchell writes†:—"I dined with the king of Prussia; he was very hearty and cheerful. He said to me, in a day or two, Pharsalia, the battle between the house of Brandenburg and Austria, would be fought. He put me in mind that he had often told me, that Brown was not the man he had been taken for; now it was plain."

On the 6th of May, the day of the battle of Prague, Mitchell writes‡:—"The whole of the Prussian army are in tears for the loss of Marshal Schwerin, one of the greatest officers this or, perhaps, any other country has produced, and one of the best of men."

"I had the honour" (continues Mitchell on the 10th) "to congratulate the king. He appeared in high spirits, but moderate at the same time, in the

* Dispatch of 19th May. Mitchell papers, vol. iii.
† Ibid., vol. lxiv. ‡ Ibid.

midst of his great successes. He said his brother Henry did extremely well on the right,—that to him the success was owing there. That Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick also, who was on the left, went afterwards and flanked the Austrians, while they were engaged at our right. That Prince Frank (?) of Brunswick had greatly distinguished himself, and that he would make a great officer. The Prince of Wurtemburg also distinguished himself. In conversation, the king gave the preference to Prince Charles of Lorraine as a general, before Marshal Brown. At Friedberg, he said, Prince Charles did ill, but that his disposition at Torr was admirable, but his orders were not obeyed. Prince Charles did not approve the disposition of Brown, and told him he would be flanked, which actually happened*."

In another dispatch of the 11th of May, Mitchell repeats his praise of the king's moderation†:—"The king appears unflushed with victory, and moderate in the midst of success. He commended to me highly the behaviour and conduct of Prince Henry, his brother, in the late battle, adding, 'I would say more if he was not my brother.' He likewise said that the Princes Ferdinand and Francis of Brunswick had greatly distinguished themselves; and everybody is full of the praises of Lieutenant-general Ziethen.

"The number of the wounded is very considerable on both sides‡, and soon after the battle, as there was a scarcity of surgeons and waggons, the king of Prussia sent to Prague, to desire they would send surgeons and waggons for the relief of the Austrian

* Mitchell papers, vol. lxiv. † Ibid., vol. iii.
‡ Dispatch of 18th May.

wounded, which was refused *. So they remained several days on the field of battle without dressings; but they have since been brought to this side of the river, and are treated in the same manner as the Prussian soldiers are."

After receipt of the dispatches relative to the battle of Prague, Lord Holderness writes †:—"The admiration we already had of his Prussian majesty is raised to the highest pitch. Men, women, and children are singing his praises. The most frantic marks of joy appear in the streets," &c.

Mere admiration, however, did not help the king out of his difficulties. He, therefore, said to Mitchell ‡:—"I see I have nothing to expect from England. The English are no longer the same people. Your want of union and steadiness has dissipated the natural strength of your nation, and, if the same conduct is continued, England will no longer be considered of that great importance in Europe."

Six days after these expressions, (18th of June) the battle of Kollin was lost. "The morning after the battle," Mitchell writes §, "the Prussian army retired to Nimburg, in perfect good order, with their baggage and artillery, having left behind them only some few cannons whose carriages had been damaged in the action. It is the unanimous opinion of all the officers I have talked with, that, had the cavalry done their duty, victory was certain."

In a second letter of the same day he says ‖:—

* Probably because in Prague itself all the surgeons had an immense number of wounded to attend to.

† 30th May. Mitchell papers, vol. xxiv.

‡ Dispatch of 12th June. Ibid., vol. iii.

§ Dispatch of 23rd June. Ibid. ‖ Ibid., vol. xxviii.

"The desire of the king to give immediate succours in Lower Silesia, his impetuosity of temper, and, above all, the contempt he has conceived of the enemy, have been the causes of this defeat. He might have had more infantry with him, and there was no necessity to attack the enemy so posted."

On the 29th of June, Mitchell continues*:—"On Monday the 27th, the king of Prussia arrived at Leitmeritz with fourteen battalions; so we have here an army of fifty battalions and seventy-five squadrons, all in perfect good order and in great spirits. When the king rode along the front of the camp, the soldiers of themselves turned out of their tents, and said,—'Give us but an opportunity, we will revenge what has happened.' An Austrian officer said,—'We have repulsed the attack, but have not gained the battle.'

"The king bears his misfortune greatly, though it is the first of the kind he ever met with. Since his arrival here he was pleased to describe to me the whole action of the 18th. He says the posts the Austrians occupied were indeed too strong, but he does not think them stronger than those he drove them from in the battle of Prague. He had too few infantry, and it was not the enemies' soldiers, but their artillery (upwards of two hundred and fifty cannon), well posted, that made his men retire.

"He imputes the loss of this battle to the ardour of his soldiers, who attacked the enemy in front, contrary to his orders; for by the disposition he had made, his left wing only was to have attacked the right of the Austrians in flank. This they did with great success, took several batteries, and advanced

* Mitchell Papers, vol. iii.

two hundred paces beyond them; and having gained the flank of the enemy, put them in great confusion. From this right wing he intended to have drawn troops to support the attack on the left, if there should be occasion; and by remaining in the position he had placed it in, the left of the enemy would have been kept in respect, and could not have acted. But the good effects of this disposition were entirely defeated by the too great ardour of his soldiers towards the centre, who, unhappily seeing the progress the left wing was making, and eager to share in the victory which they began to think certain, attacked first a village, which lay a little to the centre of the Austrian army, which they took, and then the whole Prussian wing engaged, and was by that means exposed to the dreadful fire of the Austrian battery and lines, whose artillery were all charged with cartridge shot.

"The cause of these misfortunes * is chiefly owing to the great success the king of Prussia's army has had in eight successive battles against the Austrians, and particularly at the victory of Prague, which made his Prussian majesty sanguine that he could force them from the most advantageous position, and, indeed, one must be more than man to be so absolutely free from presumption after such a series of success.

"I am informed that the king, unaccustomed to disappointment, was a good deal dejected after the battle. He has now recovered his spirits, and applies as usual to business. I had yesterday a very long conversation with him. He talks very reasonably and with great coolness upon the unhappy

* Other dispatches of Mitchell of the same day, vol. iii.

event. He sees, in the full extent, what may be the consequences to him, to his family, and to all Europe; but he fears them not, and has taken his party. He thinks another battle lost must end in his ruin, and therefore will be cautious of venturing; but he will not lose a favourable opportunity. What chiefly distresses him is the number of his enemies, and the attacks they are threatening in the different parts of his very extended dominions.

"The king said, 'I will now speak to you as a private man. You know my aversion to all subsidies,—that I ever refuse them. I thought, and I think still, it is too mean a footing for me to put myself upon. Considering the great progress of my enemies, I wish, however, to know, whether I may depend upon assistance, and how far, on the loss of my revenues? I have still good hopes to be able to do without any pecuniary assistance; and I give you my word, that nothing but absolute and irresistible necessity shall make me be any burthen to my allies; and the kinder their dispositions are, I will be the more cautious of abusing them.'

"For nine months together," adds Mitchell, "in consequence of the internal dissension of England, the king has been answered with fair words. But in the situation his affairs now are in, there is no time to be lost; if England will not endeavour to save him, he must save himself as he can."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Death of the Mother of Frederick II.—His account of his Youth and Family Affairs.

On the 28th of June, ten days after the battle of Kollin, died Sophia Dorothea, the mother of king Frederick. Mitchell speaks in several dispatches of his unfeigned and profound sorrow.

"The king" (he writes on the 2nd of July*) "has seen nobody since he has received this news, and I hear he is deeply afflicted. His grief, I am sure, is sincere; for never any man gave stronger marks of duty and affection than he has done on every occasion to his mother; and no mother ever deserved better of all her children than she did.

"Yesterday, he continues on the 4th of July †, the king sent for me, which is the first time he had seen anybody since he received the news of the death of his mother. I had the honour to remain with him some hours in his closet: I must own to your lordship I was most sincerely affected to see him indulging his grief, and giving way to the warmest filial affections by recalling to mind the many obligations he had to his late mother, and repeating to me her sufferings, and the manner in which she bore them, the good she did to every body, and the comfort he had to have contributed to make the latter part of her life easy and agreeable.

"The king was pleased to tell me a great deal of the private history of his family, and the manner in

* Mitchell Papers, vol. iii.
† Ibid. vol. lxi. to the 1st (?) July.

which he had been educated: owning, at the same time, the loss he felt for the want of proper education: blaming his father, but with great candour and gentleness, and acknowledging that in his youth he had been *étourdi*, and deserved his father's indignation, which, however, the late king, from the impetuosity of his temper, had carried too far. He told me, that by his mother's persuasion, and that of his sister of Baireuth, he had given a writing, under his hand, declaring he never would marry any other person than the princess Emilia of England; that this was very wrong and had provoked his father. He said he could not excuse it, but from his youth and want of experience. That this promise unhappily was discovered by the late queen Caroline, to whom it was intrusted, having shown or spoken of it to the late general Diemar. He had betrayed the secret to Seckendorf, who told it to the king of Prussia. Upon this discovery, and his scheme of making his escape, his misfortunes followed.

"He told me, with regard to making his escape, that he had long been unhappy, and hardly used by his father. But what made him resolve upon it was, that one day his father struck him, and pulled him by the hair, and in this dishevelled condition he was obliged to pass the parade; that, from that moment, he was resolved, cost what it might, to venture it.

"That during his imprisonment at Küstrin, he had been treated in the harshest manner, and brought to the window to see Katt beheaded, and that he had fainted away.

"That . . . * might have made his escape and saved himself, the Danish minister having given

* The space for the name is left blank in the MS., but M. Von Raumer thinks it may be Katt.

him notice; but he loitered, he believed, on account of some girl he was fond of.

"The king said, the happiest years of his life were those he spent at . . . *, a house he had given to his brother, prince Henry. There he retired after his imprisonment, and remained till the death of the late king. His chief amusement was study, and making up for the want of education by reading, making extracts, and conversing with sensible people and men of taste.

"The king talked much of the obligation he had to the queen his mother, and of his affection to his sister, the princess of Baireuth, with whom he had been bred. He observed, that the harmony which had been mentioned in his family was greatly owing to the education they had had, which, though imperfect and defective in many things, was good in this: that all the children had been brought up, not as princes, but as the children of private persons."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Frederick on the State of Europe and the inactivity of England—Assent of Mitchell—Misfortune of the King—His Letter to Mitchell on the conduct of the War in Lower Saxony—Mitchell to Holderness in defence of King Frederick—Conduct of the French—Neutrality of Hanover—Victory at Rossbach—Holderness on the state of Parties in England—Reconciliation between Newcastle and Pitt—Renewed exertions of England—Victory at Leuthen—War against the Swedes.

MITCHELL'S dispatches give very interesting information respecting Frederick's state of mind, wishes, hopes, and apprehensions, in the second half of the

* Without doubt, Rheinsberg.

eventful year of 1757. I subjoin some extracts in chronological order.

"The king said*, it was his opinion, that in order to procure a desirable peace, the utmost exertion of force must be continued on all sides. That this he was resolved to do, and he hoped his majesty would do the same.

"The king said he could not help thinking that the French intended so to manage matters as to preserve to themselves the arbitrage of the affairs of Europe. That to secure this, they would make a war of show and parade, without acting vigorously; but when other powers were exhausted, they would then take upon them, and give the law to the whole. That, if this could be prevented by timely negotiations, it was certainly for our interest and the good of the common cause to hinder the French from becoming the arbiters of Europe.

"The king flattered himself that England would, in this dangerous and critical conjuncture, exert her whole force to save herself and the liberties of Europe; that she would indeed be the last undone, but her ruin was not less certain than that of the powers upon the Continent; that, after the great and noble efforts made in the days of the duke of Marlborough, to preserve the balance of power, and to curb the ambition of France, he could not persuade himself that England should sit tamely still, and abandon what she had so long and so gloriously struggled for."

The king had, however, ground to complain of the inactivity of England. He said a few days

* Dispatch of 9th July, Mitchell Papers, vol. iii.

later*:—"It was his misfortune to have allied himself with England in her decadence, and to have been used as no ally of England ever was. If, however, he looked at the exertions of Great Britain in the Spanish and Austrian Succession wars, he concluded that it was not want of power, but want of inclination, and a hankering after the old system, that had occasioned these strange and, he thought, unjustifiable proceedings."

Mitchell himself was so dissatisfied with the conduct of the English government, that he desired to be recalled. "I have," he writes on the 28th July†, "seen the king of Prussia great in prosperity, but greater still in adversity. I know his temper; his affairs are in a most perilous situation‡; he despises life, and therefore may be induced to attempt something desperate."

After Mitchell, on the 11th August§, has clearly shown Frederick's relation to Austria, France, Russia, and the army of the empire, he continues:—"This is the true picture of his Prussian majesty's most dangerous and almost desperate situation, which may probably end in the ruin of the house of Brandenburg, but with it will fall the liberty of mankind. The option, indeed, of being the slave of France or Austria will still be left. Pitiful alternative!"

Misfortunes, indeed, were crowded into these months. On the 26th July the French triumphed over Cumberland at Hastenbeck; on the 28th Hameln surrendered;‖ on the 30th August Apraxin beat Marshal Lehwald at Grosz Jägerndorf; on the

* Dispatch of 11th July. Mitchell Papers, vol. iii. † Ibid.
‡ Dispatch of 7th August. Ibid. § Ibid.

7th September Nadasdi overcame General Winterfeld at Görlitz; on the 13th the Swedes entered Pomerania; and on the 8th September the ignominious treaty of Kloster-Seven was concluded by the mediation of Lynar, by which the whole of Germany, as far as the Elbe, was given up to the French.

About this time King Frederick wrote to Mitchell*; —"I have learned, my dear sir, all the details of the unfortunate affair at Hameln. They quite justify the propositions which I made to you at Leitmeritz. The English will neither support their operations by sea, nor the war by land. I feel like the last champion of the League, ready to combat, if necessary, even on the ruins of my country. We must still have patience to see the result of what will happen here. It is certain I do not cause any delay in the war, but there are difficulties to vanquish which cannot be overcome except by patience. I may say fortune follows Cæsar, but Cato follows Pompey. At present, I want the fortune of Cæsar, and notwithstanding that, all the obstacles will not be removed. I hope soon to write to you in less vague terms, and give you information, both more precise and more decisive."

On the 28th August, Mitchell writes to Lord Holderness:—"England is cheated, and its ministers duped, by Hanover. What a pitiful figure will they make in England! The most notorious breach of faith has been wantonly committed, to support a weak, ill-judged, and ineffectual measure. You know what has happened. Why was not the king of

* Written by his own hand from Dresden, without a date. Mitchell Papers, vol. xl.

Prussia previously consulted? I can answer with my head, he would have yielded to any reasonable proposal for the safety of Hanover.

"What will posterity say of an administration that made the treaty of Westminster for the safety of Hanover, and suffered the Hanoverian ministers to say openly, that they have no treaty with the king of Prussia; nay, have suffered them to betray that prince, who has risked all to save them, and whose misfortunes are owing to his generosity and good faith?

"Let us have done with negotiating; after what has happened no man will trust us. I know not how to look the king of Prussia in the face; and honour, my lord, is not to be purchased with money!

"Nothing (less) than a miracle or an absolute submission to France can save the king*. The loss of a battle will only anticipate the ruin of his countries a few weeks; the winning of it cannot save him. I lose myself when I think of his situation. I see no salvation for him but in the arms of France. He assumes a gaiety and easiness not natural nor suited to his situation; but I can perceive a sensible alteration in his temper, which has made him do some harsh things†. He said, 'I have commenced

* Letter of 31st August. Mitchell Papers, vol. xl.

† Letter of 30th August. Mitchell Papers, vol. lxiv. Amongst these harsh things may be reckoned the plundering of the palace of Count Brühl, of which Mitchell disapproved. Letter of 1st November he says:—"I am sorry to tell your lordship that Count Brühl's house at Groswitz, near Herzberg, was plundered, as it is said, by the king of Prussia's orders; at least, he lodged in the house, and was present when it was done. Acts of private vengeance are always dishonourable, unjust, and impolitic." And in another letter he says:—"It is a most dangerous example for himself, his subjects, and the army."

the war like a general; I will finish it like a partizan.'

"The king never appears discouraged or disconcerted*; he even in public shows a cheerfulness and easiness of mind difficult to be maintained in such circumstances.

"The French everywhere levy military contributions. Their intention is to ruin Germany, and to destroy both friend and foe; for they have treated the elector of Mayence's subjects no better than the others. It was said†, that for the debts contracted in this town, when the people asked payment, they insolently answered, 'How! these burghers of Germany pretend to keep accounts?'

"The king said, 'This neutrality of Hanover is infamous, and has been negotiated by the Hanoverians through the court of Denmark‡. The king has lost that *fermeté* he once had. The canaille of Hanover have done this. They have not saved their country, and they betray their protector. The Swedes have taken the bailliages belonging to your master (the king of England) in Pomerania.' I observed to the king of Prussia, that no English minister had been consulted in this affair§. He answered, 'I believe it; but the damage done to me and the common cause is the same, and you have been a witness of the sincerity with which I have acted.'"

Lord Holderness joined in these complaints against the ministry, and of the folly and treachery of its

* Letter of 17th September. Mitchell Papers. vol. iii.
† Second letter of 17th September. Ibid.
‡ Letter of 19th September. Ibid., vol. lxiv.
§ Letter of 15th October. Ibid., vol. xxviii.

administration*. The first relief, however, did not come from England, but from the king himself; his victory at Rossbach on the 5th November surpassed all expectations, and awakened even in many of his opponents a sense of German honour and patriotism, which ought to be constantly kept in view as the guide of all our internal policy. The dissensions of the Germans among themselves formed the darkest and the most disgusting of the features of the Seven Years' war.

"The French," says Mitchell†, "have taken away all horses and carriages, and have so ruined the country, that it would have been impossible to follow them, had the king thought proper to attempt it."

A still more decisive circumstance was, that Frederick was pressed in other quarters by greater dangers, and the one victory by Rossbach was gained over only one of many enemies. On the 16th October Haddick laid Berlin under contribution; on the 12th November Nadasdi took Schweidnitz; and on the 22nd prince Charles of Lorraine and Daun triumphed over Bevern at Breslau.

Mitchell‡, therefore, again extols the exertions of Frederick, complains bitterly of his situation, and says, "That, during the whole campaign, England had done nothing, and the strength of the nation was melted away in faction."

Respecting the latter, Lord Holderness writes on the 15th December, 1757 §:—"The two great parties in this kingdom consist properly in the court party, under the duke of Newcastle, and the opposition,

* Letter of 16th September. Mitchell Papers, vol. xxix.
† Dispatch of 16th November. Ibid., vol. iv.
‡ Letter of 28th November. Ibid. § Ibid., vol. xxix.

under Mr. Pitt and his friends. The subdivisions of the court party were the old Whigs, the remains of Sir Robert Walpole's friends, and those who had personally attached themselves to the duke, or the minister Fox, avowedly supported by them. The opposition consisted of the Leicestershire-house people, the remains of the old opposition, and the Tories. The opposition had got such an ascendency over the generality of the minds of the people, by laying all the ill-success of the war upon the administration, that, after the secession of Mr. Fox and his friends, it was absolutely impossible for the duke of Newcastle to stem the torrent. It was therefore judged proper for him and the lord chancellor to retire from business, and had they consented, I should have made my retreat likewise. But the reasons that were urged by the party to dissuade me from it were too strong to be resisted. I was the only one that had any degree of experience in the public routine of business, and besides, it was thought right to have one in the service, as a kind of hostage, for the support of measures the king had at heart, to keep the door open for the party to have access to the closet, and to check the new people, in case they should mean to push their popularity, and lower the crown beyond the bounds of decency. It was therefore determined for me, by my friends, that I should remain in office, but avowedly without connecting myself with the new people, or without breaking, in the least degree, the strict alliance that I had concluded with the duke of Newcastle and his party.

"Thus I remained, and agreed with Pitt, at least with regard to the Prussian alliance, and saw the danger it might be exposed to by some foreign

councils. A motley administration, however, remained, without a majority in parliament, or the confidence of the closet.

"Various negotiations were at this time undertaken for forming a new administration. The duke of Newcastle determined not to join with Fox, and could not agree upon terms with Pitt, till at last it was resolved that Fox should undertake the administration. For many reasons, I drew into the background, and they concluded the whole strength of the nation was joining against them. Those who thought so were in the right. However, they held a council the day following, and some warm heads among them determined the rest to risk a trial, and the Saturday was the day appointed for the new ministry to enter into office. But an accident gave an opportunity for a representation to be made to the king, and showed his majesty how much he had been misled. A message was immediately sent to the duke of Newcastle, and the present administration formed in consequence of it, the basis of which is the mutual interest of the two leaders: neither can govern without the assistance of the other; but as long as cordiality exists between them, the king's affairs will be carried on here with vigour and unanimity."

This reconciliation of Newcastle and Pitt had such happy consequences, that Lord Barrington soon after writes to Mitchell*:—"I never remember this country so much united in its politics, or in so good-humour with the ministers. Both parliament and people are ready to give the utmost farthing for the support of the war in Germany, confiding in

* Letter of 11th December, 1757. Mitchell Papers, vol. xxxi.

the king of Prussia there, and in the government here, that what is given will be well employed."

Having acquired fresh courage, Lord Holderness reproves Mitchell for his despondency*. He asks, supposing his letters were to be laid before parliament, in which, in contradiction with himself, he says nothing can save the king of Prussia; and then again requires that England shall make double exertions in his support.

"The councils of a nation," continues Holderness, "cannot be governed by starts like these. Now we have an administration, we have likewise a plan; that plan will be supported and followed, and not be diverted by small accidents, either in favour or in disfavour of the system adopted. The proposal now to send English troops to the Continent would be unpopular, and dissolve the administration. The efforts of England, though you call them *nothing*, are, in fact, immense. We take upon us the whole support of the king's electoral army, of between 40,000 and 50,000 men; we propose to give a subsidy of four millions of crowns to the king of Prussia; we propose buying an alliance with the Danes, if it can be purchased; and if money can keep the Russians quiet, or stir the Ottoman Porte, it will not be spared."

These important changes in England were certainly of advantage to Frederick, but the demands of England increased with its exertions; on which account the king one day said to Mitchell, he would not be governed by Mr. Pitt. "I refused," said he, "being governed by kings†." Nor could Frederick

* Letter of 21st December. Mitchell Papers, vol. xxix.
† Letter of 6th January, 1758. Ibid., vol. lxiv.

obtain a compliance with his natural wish for an English fleet to enter the Baltic, and by serious measures, divert the danger which threatened on the part of Russia*.

Frederick's great victory at Leuthen on the 5th December had a more decisive influence than all these circumstances; for though its immediate result was only to recover the possession of Silesia, it raised the king's military reputation to the highest pitch, and established a conviction that heroic perseverance bears better fruits than base concession.

On the 25th December Mitchell writes†:—"As the king has no view of conquest in this war, another consideration may determine him to think of safety, even in the midst of success; and he cannot but be sensible that, by the late victory, he has reached the very summit of military glory, which it is impossible to surpass; nor will the gain of ten more battles add to his reputation, though the loss of one must undo it. England must therefore interfere, and be active. When I reflect, my lord, upon the present unhappy state of Europe, that the two great powers of Germany have almost already ruined each other, whilst France looks on with dissimulated pleasure, faintly assisting the one, and perhaps stimulating the other, to accelerate the ruin of both, I am filled with the most melancholy apprehensions, convinced that the devastation of Germany is but one point of the system of France. Would that it were possible to reconcile Prussia and Austria, and direct them against France! Vain and impossible as this scheme may appear, it was approved of by him in a conversation before the battle of Prague; and still I believe that

* Mitchell Papers, vol. xii. † Ibid., vol. xxiv.

more facility would be found on his part than on that of the empress-queen."

On the 11th of January, 1758, Mitchell continues: —"I had an audience with the king at Breslau. I found him pleased and happy, but not elated with the great and almost incredible success of his arms. He talks of the action of the 5th of December (Leuthen), and of what had followed since, with the modesty becoming a hero, whose magnanimity is not to be affected with the smiles nor with the frowns of fortune.

"The disposition for the battle at Leuthen was entirely the king's own, and his orders were punctually obeyed. Some officers of the greatest experience assure me, that it was impossible to mend it. The troops, they say, marched up to the enemy, with a countenance as if they had been going up to review.

"The king is highly pleased with the conduct of his generals, Lehwald and Holstein, in the war against the Swedes. At Stockholm the people begin to murmur, and the spirit of party rages: the different parties tear each other to pieces, and as the war was undertaken without the consent of the state, and is like to prove unfortunate, the whole blame is thrown against the advisers of that measure."

CHAPTER XXXV.

Letters of Peter and Catherine to Sir Charles Williams—Maladministration of the Russian Government—England's demands of Frederick—His Counter-declaration—The Fall of Bestucheff—Catherine and the Schuwaloffs—Dispute between Catherine and Elizabeth—Catherine wishes to be separated from Peter and to leave Russia—French Intrigues—Elizabeth's hatred of Frederick.

At the close of the year 1757, Frederick had, by zeal and courage, so far restored his almost desperate affairs, that in the next campaign he might have been able victoriously to withstand his enemies, could he still have kept back the Russians. But this long-cherished hope entirely disappeared: neither the recalled, and often deceived English ambassador, nor his successor Keith, were able to attain their object: for there was no question of impartial consideration, and when despicable means (generally bribery) had brought matters to an equipoise, the blind passion of Elizabeth decided against Prussia.

When Sir Charles Williams took leave at St. Petersburg on the 19th of August, 1757, he received two MS. letters from Peter and Catherine. The former says *, "I do not doubt your attachment to my interests; they are united to those of the king of England on more than one side. I hope that the common enemy of both nations will have cause to feel it one day."

Catherine writes, "I have resolved to write to you, as I could not see you to bid you farewell. My most sincere regrets accompany him whom I look upon as

* Mitchell Papers, vol. lxi.

one of my best friends, and whose conduct has attracted both my esteem and my friendship. I shall never forget the obligations that I owe to you. To recompense you in a manner conformable to the nobleness of your sentiments, I will show you what I will do: I will seize every occasion imaginable to bring back Russia to that which I recognise as its true interest; that is, to be intimately united to England. To give to it all possible human succour, and the ascendency which it ought to have for the benefit of all Europe, and especially for that of Russia, over their common enemy France, whose grandeur is the shame of Russia. I will study to put these sentiments in practice; on them I will build my glory, and will prove their solidity to the king your master. Be assured that one of the things I wish for most in this world is to see you return hither in triumph. I trust that one day the king your master will not refuse me the favour I ask, to let me see you again. It cannot but redound to his profit."

From these openly declared sentiments of the successor to the throne, it was very natural that Apraxin should return, when he heard that the empress was ill, and that he in his turn should be dismissed as soon as ever she recovered *.

The Dutch ambassador, Du Swart, gives a circumstantial account of the state of affairs at the court of St. Petersburg, from which I extract the following †:—"At the commencement of last winter Iwan III. was brought to Schlusselberg, and afterwards to St. Petersburg, where he was placed in

* Russia, vol. lxvii. † October 16, 1757. Mitchell Papers, vol. xii.

a good house belonging to the widow of a secretary of the secret police (inquisition secrète); he is closely watched: the empress had him brought to the winter palace, and saw him. She was dressed in man's clothes. It is doubted whether the great duke and the great duchess will ascend the throne, or Iwan; or whether Schuwaloff, who has acquired great power and immense wealth, is working for himself.

"The state of society in Russia presents a frightful picture of licentiousness, disorder, and a dissolution of all the bonds of civil society. The empress hears and sees no one but the Schuwaloffs: she inquires into nothing, proceeds in her old course of life, and has literally given up the empire to be pillaged by everybody. Never was Russia in a more disorderly, dangerous, and lamentable condition. There is not the slightest trace left of good faith, honour, confidence, shame, or equity. Nothing is seen but boundless vanity and prodigality, which lead to ruin. The old families and the common people are oppressed in the most cruel manner by all these upstarts. The children of the most distinguished houses are compelled to marry persons of the meanest origin, who happen to be in favour. The empress is aware of the machinations and amours of Catherine and Poniatowski; she entertains for her and the great duke the most sovereign contempt; and the nation detests the latter more and more every day."

When the Russians, notwithstanding this wretched state of affairs, again began to move, Frederick renewed his complaints that England had not sent a fleet to the Baltic, or manifested more determina-

tion in St. Petersburg, and thereby averted the danger *. He said, that when he entered into the treaty with the king of England, he did believe that the English interest was stronger at that court than it has been found to be, and that it would have been supported in a better manner.

"As to the second point of sending English troops into Germany, when I urged the impossibility of raising more men, without ruining the manufactures, he laughed, and said, it was a strange mode of reasoning to prefer considerations of trade and manufactures to our own security and independence. That we did not seem sensible enough of the danger to which England was exposed, if things went wrong upon the continent. That it was impossible for him to resist the united forces of Europe. The king mentioned what England had done in 1702 and 1740. The pretension of England that the king should send troops to Hanover, having the Russians upon his back, was unjust and absurd. He said, he would rather take no subsidies. 'I have taken my resolution,' said he, 'which is not to touch any subsidy but in the case of extreme necessity. My affairs are now in a better situation than they were lately, and I shall be happy if I can restore them without subsidies. But my engagements with England continue the same; and I will give every assistance in my power to the king of England.'

"This magnanimous and generous resolution (not to be paralleled in the whole history of subsidies) is heightened to a degree of romance, when we consider the falling off of the public revenue, and that all civil expenses have for some time past been paid

* Dispatch of 9th February, 1758. Mitchell Papers, vol. iv.

in paper at Berlin. The king will not in any case promise, by a treaty with England, what he might perhaps not be able to fulfil: he is resolved, above all things, to retain the full and uncontrolled use of his army."

In reference to the Russians, Frederick still believed that something might yet be done with them: money, he said, was the only prevailing argument in that country, and must be employed, whenever one wished to succeed in any point of consequence; in particular Bestucheff ought to be again stimulated to exert himself*. But he had been arrested on the 25th of February, with his wife, son, and secretary, and his papers put under seal†. The first reason was the affair of the war; the second, that Bestucheff was a friend of Peter, whom the other party at that time wished to exclude from the throne.

Keith's dispatch of the 14th March ‡ gives further particulars of this important event: he says, "The immediate pretext was his having entered in some intrigue with Catherine; proofs of which were found in Apraxin's papers. Esterhazy and Hospital (the Austrian and French ambassadors) give law to court and town. They have likewise got the great duke absolutely in their hands; having in order thereto alienated his affections from Catherine, who used to have great influence over him. It is supposed that one Brockdorf has been the instrument of this change, who ingratiated himself with his imperial highness by encouraging him in all sorts of

* Keith's dispatch of 27th January, 1758. Russia, vol. lviii.
† Dispatch of 8th March. Mitchell Papers, vol. iv.
‡ Russia, vol. lxviii., and Mitchell Papers, vol. xxii.

debaucheries, and, in that light, Catherine had complained of him to the empress; but unfortunately her complaints were not listened to, her enemies having taken care, by false suggestions, to give the empress bad impressions of her, so that at present she is far from being well at court."

"When the news came here," writes Keith on the 30th March *, "of my being arrived at Warsaw, the French ambassador went to the vice-chancellor, and represented to him the necessity of losing no time; insisted that he and his friends should make their last push against Bestucheff immediately; that, if he did not agree to this proposal, he would go directly to Bestucheff, and discover to him all that had passed, and join with him to break his (Woronzow's) neck. Alarmed at this, the latter entered into the scheme, and the French ambassador well knew how to excite the empress's suspicion against Bestucheff. The latter, it is said, bears his misfortune with spirit, and defies his enemies to prove anything of consequence against him."

"Affairs with Catherine" (dispatch of 18th April) "are not quite right†. However, it is said the favourite Schuwaloff has sent her a message to assure her that the empress will see her soon, and that, upon her highness's making a small submission, everything will be made up to her mind.

"Catherine" (dispatch of 28th April) "has been all along in the greatest distress; ill with the empress and still more with the great duke. She has received a very sensible mortification, the other day, her favourite bedchamber woman having been taken from her and put under arrest. This, as

* Russia, vol. lxviii. † Ibid.

I hear, occasioned an interview between the empress and the great duchess, four days ago, when, after strong expressions on one side, and warm expostulations on the other, her highness fell at the empress's feet, and told her, that she had been so unfortunate as to incur her majesty's displeasure, though innocent, and had thereby drawn upon herself so many and so sensible mortifications as, joined to family quarrels, made her life a burthen. She had but one favour to ask; that her majesty would allow her to retire out of Russia, and to pass the rest of her life with her mother, assuring the empress, at the same time, that if her majesty should think it for the interest of the empire that the great duke should have another wife, neither she nor any of her family would make the smallest objection to it. The empress, they say, was greatly affected with this discourse, and talked with much more softness than before, entering into several particulars with a greater air of kindness than she had done a long time past; and when, in the conversation, her highness was beginning to touch upon something relating to the great duke's unkindness, who was present all the time, the empress made her a sign to hold her tongue, and in a low voice told her, that she must have another conversation with her alone. It is hoped that a reconciliation between them will soon be effected, Catherine having many friends amongst those of the first rank."

"She had for a time wholly retired; but Elizabeth desired that she should appear in public, and upon a promise, it was said, of everything going on well between them*. The French ambassador en-

* Dispatch of 23rd May. Russia, vol. lxviii.

deavours to interfere in everything, but Catherine has always rebuked him."

"I hear," writes Keith on the 14th July*, "the great duke and she are perfectly reconciled at the expense of the French ambassador, whose bad offices between their highnesses have, upon this occasion, come to light."

Unfortunately no advantage for Frederick ensued from these quarrels and reconciliations. Schuwaloff, indeed, told Keith†:—"The empress had an abhorrence to bloodshed, and was, upon that account, extremely uneasy under the present circumstances of affairs; but to his very natural answer, that nothing then was easier than to make peace according to the wishes of the king of Prussia, nothing further was done."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Complaints respecting England—Recall of Mitchell—War in Lower Saxony—Battle of Zorndorf—Behaviour of the Russians and Austrians—Frederick to the Margravine of Bairuth and to D'Argens—Campaign of 1759—Free battalions—Relation of Russia and Austria—Peter, Elizabeth, Favourites—Views of France—Louis XV. Madame Pompadour—Negotiations for Peace—Unpleasant situation of Frederick—Frederick to the King of England—Demands of England—Ferdinand of Brunswick—Voltaire—Battle of Leignitz—Frederick on Providence and Fate—Frederick's Courage.

SINCE the union of the two parties, England was certainly much more active than previously; her efforts were, however, almost entirely directed against

* Dispatch of 23rd May. Ditto of 12th December.
† Dispatch of 12th May. Ibid.

France, though scarcely any good was by this means effected for the king of Prussia. Accordingly Marshal Keith wrote to Mitchell, on the 10th February, 1758*: "When the English have drunk ten bottles of beer to the king of Prussia's health, at his birthday, they think they have done all that honour requires for such an ally. They wish their pockets may pay for their skins. What a shameful opinion the world must have of them! their heads are not better than their hearts. Ten thousand men might, perhaps, save them this year, when all the power of England will not be able to do it the next; for when once we are ruined, their turn will soon follow. At last, if things go better than I expect, we shall have the glory of having saved the English, not they us."

In March, 1758, Mitchell was recalled; but, in consequence of a subsequent resolution, he remained till matters were settled. Keith writes on this subject†:—"The English ministers are mad to call you away. They are afraid of being served by one who acts with candour and sincerity, and choose rather to employ one who will flatter their indolence, than one who, having the good of his country more at heart than the favour of those who govern it, has perhaps told them truths which they take for reproaches. Poor country! what can it expect from people who dare not employ one honest man, for fear of discovering the difference between him and them?"

When Frederick II. received information that, in consequence of his dispatches, Mitchell had been called home‡, he said to him, "Do you know, my

* Mitchell papers, vol. xxxiii. † The 20th March. Ibid.
‡ In April. Ibid., vol. lxiv. p. 121.

friend, that you are recalled? I believe that Mr. Pitt is turned mad."

The king was again obliged, and with justice, to refuse the request that he would send troops into Lower Saxony. He said*:—"If he had the good fortune to beat the Austrians, perhaps they might make a separate peace; in which case, he had no objection to act offensively against France; and it would give him great pleasure if, before he died, he could carry a flambeau to the gates of Paris."

This inclination might arise from a love of fame, and attachment to Germany, as well as from anger at the arbitrary conduct of the French. The latter foolishly said†, "The inhabitants of Halberstadt had been guilty of high treason, by receiving a Prussian garrison into their town."

At the same time the dangers increased from the advance of the Russians. They conquered Prussia, and, without any regard to remonstrances, they passed through the republic of Poland‡. The Austrians, therefore, proposed, either through suspicion or self-interest, that the Russian army should occupy Prussia, only in the name of Maria Theresa§; for this would make the matter easier for them, inasmuch as Russia was expected only to act as an auxiliary. To this Elizabeth replied, "That, after the declarations of Frederick, she considered herself as a principal in the war."

It was not till the hardly-won battle of Zorndorf, on the 25th August, 1758, forced the Russians back,

* The 11th April. Mitchell Papers, vol. lxiv. p. 121.
† Dispatch of 22nd January. Ibid., vol. iv.
‡ Dispatch of 15th April. Ibid., vol. xxiv.
§ The 17th April. Ibid.

that Mitchell, in his dispatch*, does justice to the bravery of the Russians, complains that the Prussian left wing did not do its duty, and that the cruelty of the Cossacks and Calmucks was the cause that the soldiers very rarely gave quarter. "The king," he says, "exposed himself to the greatest dangers. I was a witness of some of them; and I am informed that, when the infantry on the left wing began to give way, he bravely took the colours in his own hand, and led them on."

After this hard-earned victory, and when the Austrians were already in Lusatia, Mitchell, according to his instructions, was obliged to repeat the demand, which it was impossible to comply with, for sending a corps of troops into Lower Saxony. The king was, with justice, impatient, and represented his own situation in such a convincing manner, that Mitchell was silent. Frederick, however, wrote to prince Ferdinand of Brunswick†, that he would leave him the cavalry if a battle was to be expected, but that he should send it back if the campaign was to pass over in marches and encampments.

In Mitchell's dispatches‡ there are but too many testimonies of the cruelty of the Russians, laying waste the country, burning the villages, &c. "The Austrians," he says, in another place, "are not indeed so bad as the Russians, but the people of this country (Saxony) are much out of humour with them. Some of their generals have treated the peasants in Lusatia with great sharpness§; and, not contented to pillage them, have insolently upbraided

* Dispatch of 26th August. Mitchell Papers, vol. iv.
† Dispatch of 6th October. Ibid. ‡ Ibid.
§ Dispatch of 17th September. Ibid.

them with the name of heretics. This has had a wonderful effect among the lower people, who, in general, are much better disposed to the Prussians than to the Austrians."

Frederick would very willingly have concluded peace, yet he was, probably, of opinion that it was imprudent to seek it urgently, and thus to excite among his enemies a suspicion that he was discouraged. He therefore answered his sister, the Margravine of Baireuth, who had written him a letter of a political nature*:—"I highly approve of your good intentions, but I must tell you that I am like a carp. If the French, Austrians, and Russians have anything to say, they have but to speak; but, as for me, I am content with beating them and holding my tongue. Heaven grant that I may learn good news of my sister! This interests me more than all the negotiations in the world." With equal spirit Pitt expressed himself:—"When peace shall be proper to come under consideration, no peace of Utrecht will again stain the annals of England†."

Yet the firm resolution of the king, not to submit to any unworthy conditions, could not revive the gaiety and cheerful courage of youth; the glory of resisting Europe, which was foolishly and blindly combined against him, was accompanied with bitter feelings, as the king's letters to D'Argens‡ show in an affecting manner. Thus he writes:—"In a word, my dear marquis, I am old, melancholy, and out of temper. Some rays of my former good-humour return occasionally, but they are sparks which vanish

* Letter of 24th August. Mitchell Papers, vol. iv.

† Pitt to Mitchell, 12th June, 1759. Ibid, vol. xxx.

‡ Letters of 1759–60. Œuvres Posth., vol. x. 200, 204, 210, 213.

for want of a focus; they are flashes of lightning, which dart through the gloomy clouds. I tell you the truth. If you were to see me, you would not recognise the traces of what I formerly was. You would see an old man, becoming grey, deprived of half his teeth; without gaiety, without fire, without imagination. For these four years I have been in purgatory; if there is another life, the Almighty should give me credit for what I have suffered in this. I wish you everything, that I want, to be happy; tranquillity, repose, content, and health. I have nothing left. My constitution is impaired; fortune, health, gaiety, and youth, abandon me; I am fit for nothing but to people the domains of Proserpine. Ah, how greatly does the school of adversity tend to make a man prudent, moderate, patient, and mild! It is a dreadful trial, but when once overcome, it is profitable for the remainder of life."

In the year 1759 the king was reduced to act almost entirely on the defensive*, and the defeat of Künersdorf brought him to the brink of destruction. I shall take the liberty of adding the following extracts from the very scanty and unconnected dispatches of the ambassadors, &c.

"The king has opened this campaign on the defensive plan, in the execution of which he has shown himself so much superior to his enemies†, as all mankind allow him to be in a defensive war. Daun, at

* With respect to the excesses of the Russians, the king complains of the "Brigands d'Astracan et de Camchapka." Lines in his own hand-writing to Mitchell, 15th Nozember, 1760. Mitchell Papers, vol. xl.

† Dispatches of 23rd and 24th June, 1759. Ibid., vol. iv.

the head of an army more than double the Prussian, has done nothing; his magazines have been destroyed, his plans of operations disconcerted, &c.

"The ten free battalions, whom the king enlisted, are composed, it is true, of all the riff-raff of German and French deserters*, but they have done excellent service in covering the flanks and rear of the army; and, as their duty is hard, they are not extremely scrupulous in point of military discipline."

"I am well informed that the Russian generals are highly offended with the conduct of the Austrians; and the bare looking at a map† will show the absurdity, I had almost said the treachery, of Daun, who, with a prodigious army well supplied with everything, has been a spectator of the campaign from the hills of Lusatia, which province he has totally ruined. And last of all, he has suffered Prince Henry to get into the heart of Saxony, and to make that country the seat of the war; by which chain of traits it plainly appears that the court of Vienna think only of themselves, leaving only to their allies the honour and glory to fight for them, or to be ruined by them. Of this truth France is already convinced, and I hope the eyes of Russia will soon be opened."

"The king wishes to make peace with the Russians. His notion is to begin flattering the Russian vanity, and talking much of their successes‡; then you may endeavour to raise a jealousy and diffidence of their allies, and the pecuniary insinuations

* The 4th May. Mitchell Papers, vol. iv.
† The 18th October. Ibid., vol. v.
‡ The 15th November. Ibid.

should be made underhand to their dependents or confidants; for this purpose he has set apart 150,000 dollars*."

"The Russians are tired of the war, and have misunderstandings with Austria. Private disputes are going on in the court between the old favourite Rusumowsky, and the new favourite Schuwaloff†. The great duke Peter sent a message to the empress, representing that he was now come to a certain age when he might be thought capable to judge for himself‡. He could no longer submit to the restrained way of living to which her majesty was pleased to subject him, and therefore desired leave to retire to his own domain. The empress was at first extremely offended at this step, and desired him to give in his reasons in writing; but I hear the matter has been made up and hushed. The empress is often unwell, and they say she has epileptic fits.

"All the hopes of peace, which the Russian ministers excite, and all their talking, leads to nothing. The empress said to the Austrian ambassador, 'That, though she was very slow in taking her resolutions, yet she was very steady in them§, and that she was determined to carry on the war, at all events, in conjunction with her allies, even if she should be compelled to sell her clothes and jewels.'"

As in Russia female caprice and the humour of favourites triumphed over all the arguments of sound policy, so also was essentially the case in France.

* The 29th January, 1760. Mitchell Papers, vol. v.
† Dispatch from St. Petersburg of 3rd July, 1759. Russia, vol. lxix.
‡ Ditto of 5th January, 1759. Ibid.
§ Ditto of 1st January, 1760. Ibid., vol. lxx.

"From the information which I receive," says Frederick*, "the court of Versailles is completely governed by passion and caprice. The dauphin and Madame de Pompadour are at the head of the intrigues. The duke of Choiseul is a complete Austrian, and Marshal Belleisle is grown old."

"M. D'Affry, the French ambassador at the Hague†, had said: 'In our negotiations we must separate our own affairs from those of our allies, and in the end make them also come to an agreement, without which we shall never arrive at the conclusion; with a number of allies in our train, we shall never come to an end.'"

The English ambassador Yorke, by desire of Lord Holderness, asked the French ambassador D'Affry: "Supposing England and France had in a manner agreed upon their dispute, whether he meant (thought) the war should continue in Germany and they continue to act in favour of their allies, against the king of England and the king of Prussia?" To this D'Affry replied: "Do you think that we should be so foolish as to throw away our money and ruin our army in such a case?" Besides this, he let drop that he did not know what they thought at Vienna; where, as we knew, they were never pleased with ideas of peace.

An anonymous letter from Paris says‡:—"The king changes so fast, that I may truly say he grows old, lean, and melancholy. The dauphin amuses himself with singing mass with Madame de Marsan, who, by that means, is a great favourite. Madame

* Dispatch of 12th February. Mitchell Papers, vol. v.
† Dispatches of 25th January and 4th March. Ibid., vol. xv.
‡ Letter of 20th February, 1760. Ibid.

de Pompadour continues as much in the king's favour as ever, and governs everything. She continues to be honoured with the empress-queen's correspondence, and her imperial majesty writes her such letters as are suited to flatter her pride and vanity, and to increase *the friendship that so happily subsists between them for the good of the two states.* This word is expressly used, and it pleased the king as much as it does Madame de Pompadour. By such means, and by the servile court Count Stahremberg pays her, she still continues to be in the interest of that court. Everything here is brought about by intrigues and cabals. Everybody thinks how to raise himself, or to destroy his enemies. Nobody has the public good at heart."

England had not manifested any inclination to accept of the Spanish mediation in its court with France*. On this the Spanish minister Wall said to the earl of Bristol, that it was a thorough mortification to him to perceive that the king of Spain was thought to be inclined to the French interest; for what the Spanish king meant by offering his intervention was, by comparing the different pretensions of England and France, to see if it was possible to establish peace between the two crowns; and that the Catholic king never meant to dictate to one or the other of these powers what each might insist on, or where he expected either should relinquish his claims.

From a letter of the duke of Choiseul to D'Affry †, we learn, that France was inclined to end the war both by sea and land; but soon after he added, that

* Dispatch of 11th February, 1760. Mitchell Papers, vol. xv.
† Dispatches of 31st March and 11th of April. Ibid.

if the king of England persisted in including the king of Prussia in the peace, he would, to the great grief of his most Christian majesty, frustrate all these negotiations. A secret declaration, which Frederick received from Paris on the 19th of March, was more favourable; but from this equivocal conduct it is extremely difficult to decide whether the court of Versailles was more inclined to hold out false expectations, and in the end to deceive Prussia and England, or Russia and Austria. Lord Holderness, accordingly, desired Yorke to say to D'Affry, that in every case the king of Prussia must be included in the negotiations and in the peace.

"The king," writes Mitchell *, "will do everything man can do; but his country is exhausted; instruments of action are wanting; his best officers killed or prisoners; and it is with the deepest concern I am forced to own, that a general discouragement reigns through the whole army, from the false influence of which his Prussian majesty is perhaps the only person exempted. If England does not find means to detach France from the alliance, and to curb the power of Russia, the only opportunity of serving the king of Prussia will, I fear, be irretrievably lost."

On the 20th of May, Frederick addressed a letter from his camp at Meissen to the king of England †: —"Sir, my good brother, it is well known to your majesty, that fortune has shown me but little favour within the preceding year; and that I have been almost annihilated by the infinitely superior number of the enemy; and, notwithstanding the pains that

* Dispatch of 16th January. Mitchell Papers, vol. v.

† Ibid. vol. xv.

have been taken, it was impossible to repair the immense losses which I sustained in the preceding campaign. The number of my enemies is not diminished; on the contrary, I fear that they will unite all their strength to make themselves formidable this year. These weighty reasons have obliged me to see immediately to the preservation of my own territories; to recall a body of cavalry which was serving in the army of the allies, and yet this number is by no means sufficient to secure me from the dangers by which I am threatened; but I shall be extremely culpable if I do not employ all the means which God has placed in my reach to defend myself: very weighty reasons have compelled me to take this part. If events should take a favourable turn, or some fortunate circumstance should arise, I should not require being called upon again to send the same number of troops to the allied army. The allies are three against four, that is to say, 90,000 men against 120,000; I am now placed in the situation of as one against two; and I plainly foresee all the evil which may happen to me, if I do not bring together in time all the feeble remedies which I can oppose to them. This will not in the least derange the measures of prince Ferdinand, neither will the interests of your majesty suffer by it. I am, with the highest consideration," &c.

On the 12th of February, 1760, Mitchell writes respecting the young hereditary prince Ferdinand of Brunswick*:—"This young hero, by the modesty and manliness of his behaviour, by his insensibility to flattery, and by an affability which can flow from an honest heart only, has gained the esteem and

* Mitchell Papers, vol. v.

affection of everybody here, from the king to the lowest officer he has occasion to converse with. The former said of him, 'He has the judgment and the good sense of a man of forty, and he has made so much progress in military science, that I might confide to him the command of my armies.'"

"The king," says Mitchell in another place, "owned with great candour, that he was sensible the army he had was not equal in goodness to what he had brought into the field in former years; that one part of his troops are only fit to be shown at a distance to the enemy, if possible to impose upon them: that the other part were discouraged and dispirited by the memory of the misfortunes of the last campaign; but that he would endeavour by degrees to bring them back to their former courage and intrepidity. In the last year he had escaped entire ruin only by the misconduct of his enemies *. But that errors in conduct were often corrected by experience, and therefore he must not reckon to profit of anything of that kind in the course of the present campaign."

When Mitchell again urged the king to act in favour of England, which, he said, "was a faithful ally and a generous and well-disposed people, the king answered with some vivacity, that though he was accountable to no parliament, yet he owed protection to his subjects, whom he was obliged to defend with his whole force. That they would have reason to complain, if deprived of any part of it, in their present dangerous and critical situation; and that though he thought the event of the campaign extremely difficult, yet he wished, whatever might

* Dispatch of 23rd May, 1760.

happen, to be free from any reproach on the part of his own people."

The English government was so prudent and just as to declare, that the alliance with Prussia remained in full force, and that all the engagements which had been entered into would continue to be punctually observed *.

In the summer of 1760, Voltaire negotiated with the king about war and peace. Mitchell, at least, writes on this subject †:—"I believe the court of France makes use of the artful pen of Voltaire to draw secrets from the king; and when that prince writes as a wit and to a wit, he is capable of great indiscretions. But what surprizes me still more is, that whenever Voltaire's name is mentioned, his majesty never fails to give him the epithets he may deserve, which are, the worst heart and greatest rascal now living. Yet, with all this, he continues to correspond with him. Such, in this prince, is the lust of praise, from a great and elegant writer, in which, however, he will be at last the dupe; for by what I hear from good authority, of Voltaire's character, he will dissemble, but never can, or will, forgive the king what has passed between them."

"After the brilliant victory at Liegnitz ‡, Frederick commended highly the behaviour of the troops; and after having made some excellent reflections on the imperfections of human foresight, he said, 'You see how I have laboured to my purpose to bring about the event that has now happened. The victory I have gained is entirely owing to the bravery

* The 28th October, 1760. Mitchell Papers, vol. xv.
† The 31st July. Ibid., vol. v.
‡ The 20th August. Ibid., vol. xxviii.

of my troops. Had I remained in the camp of Liegnitz, I should have been surrounded on all sides. Had I arrived but one quarter of an hour sooner (qu. or later?) on the field of battle, the event would not have happened, and a few days would have put an end to the whole affair. The chief advantage that I had over the enemy was, that my army was formed before that of the enemy was quite ranged, and that by my knowledge of the ground I had got possession of the best position.' "

" I have had many disputes," writes Mitchell soon after*, " with the king upon the subject of Providence. The last was on the field of battle near Liegnitz, when he said he owed that victory to chance. I took the liberty to reply, that it was plain to me, if Providence had not given to his majesty a better understanding than to his enemies, he would not have been victorious that day. He answered with good-humour:—' I know that we do not quite agree upon that point, but at present so let it be, since you will have it so.' "

The victory of Liegnitz, however, did not hinder the enemy from advancing to Wittenberg, nay, even to Berlin; wherefore Frederick, duly appreciating the greatness of the dangers that threatened him, wrote to D'Argens † a few days before the battle of Torgau:—" I will never see the moment which shall oblige me to make a disadvantageous peace. No persuasion, no eloquence, shall ever induce me to sign my own dishonour. I will either suffer myself to be buried under the ruins of my

* The 1st November. Mitchell Papers, vol. v.

† Letter of 28th October, Œuvres Posth. x. p. 221. Battle of Torgau on the 5th November.

country, or if this consolation appears too much to fate, which persecutes me, I shall know how to put an end to my misfortunes when it will no longer be possible to endure them. I have acted, and I continue to act, according to that internal sense, and the point of honour which guide all my steps; my conduct will at all times be conformable to these principles After having sacrificed my youth to my father, my manhood to my country, I think that I have acquired a right to dispose of my old age. I have told you, and I repeat it, my hand shall never sign a disgraceful peace.

"When everything is lost, when no hope is left, —life is a disgrace, and death a duty."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Long duration of the War—Negotiations for Peace—Choiseul—Courage of Maria Theresa—Choiseul—Madame Pompadour—Louis the Fifteenth—War between Spain and England—Death of George the Second—The Russians in Silesia—The taking of Schweidnitz—Frederick's unfavourable Situation—Meditations on Death—Suicide.

EVEN those who are not convinced that Frederick was compelled to make war, must confess that its long duration is not to be attributed to him. There were certainly some negotiations for peace in 1761; but, the king of Prussia excepted, scarcely any party was in earnest; for in Austria hopes of success continued to be cherished; passions still ruled in Russia; and France, probably, sought only to conceal its new connexion with Spain.

Mitchell writes *,—"There are everywhere proofs that Frederick wishes for peace; but he will not seek it, and expose himself, that his proposals should be refused, or considered as tokens of weakness. He sends a certain Badenhaupt to Petersburg, whose brother was physician to the favourite Schuwaloff, to try to gain him."

In March, 1761, general proposals for the conclusion of peace were made by Austria, Russia, France, and Poland, which England accepted †. Frederick declared himself ready to accede to the status quo of 1756, and to agree to a general armistice. In the negotiations which took place in April between France and England, both parties desired at first to reserve the right of supporting Maria Theresa and Frederick, which would scarcely have brought about half a peace. Then it was proposed‡ that each should only be allowed to assist their allies with money; but all these plans did not advance, while France redoubled its activity at Madrid. The information of this duplicity and new danger probably led England to speak more decidedly. In the instructions to the English ambassador, Mr. Stanley, of the 18th May, we find the following passage §:—"If the duke of Choiseul shall touch the subject of the war of the king of Prussia, or even although that minister should be silent on this head, you will take care to express our constant resolution to fulfil the engagements of our crown towards that prince, and to continue as an auxiliary to support his interest with the

* The 21st of December, 1760. Mitchell Papers, vol. v.

† Dispatches of 26th March and 3rd April, 1761. France, vol. cxxi. Dispatches of 22nd April and 13th May. Mitchell Papers, vol. v.

‡ Mitchell Papers, vol. xvi. § France, vol. cxxi.

cordiality and efficacy of a sincere and faithful ally."

A dispatch of Mr. Stanley, of the 28th June, 1761, says:—"I made to Choiseul in the strongest terms a declaration of his majesty's intentions with regard to the king of Prussia, which he agreed to upon the condition that his master was to observe the same conduct in regard to the empress-queen: in talking of the Austrian alliance, Choiseul said, 'It was not I who brought it about.'

"Since the affair of Damiens, the king has never been easy in his mind. If, when he is hunting, or on any occasion, he meets a person whom he did not use to see, he starts and is extremely agitated. The provinces are in great misery; and though there is much luxury in this town, all persons are deeply in debt.

"Choiseul is a man of lively parts, but no education for business; frank enough in talk, meaning often what he says at the time, but fickle, very indiscreet, treats all affairs, even the highest, as matters of jest. He has got a credit with the king, quite independent of the lady; he treats her often slightly, sometimes roughly, tells her she is as handsome as an angel when she talks of affairs; bid her throw a memoir the other day into the fire; did not make the Austrian alliance, which was done by Cardinal Bernis; had expressed his dislike thereof to his confidants. He is envious of that court's generally hated treaty, which was partly owing to the indiscreet expressions of the king of Prussia about the mistress, and contempt of the cardinal's verses most certainly.

"The duke of Choiseul related to Mr. Stanley*,

* The 12th June. France, vol. cxxi.

that as he was ambassador in Vienna, and Olmutz besieged, Maria Theresa said to him, that she would defend herself to the utmost, and retire from town to town till she came to the last village in Hungary. To which she added:—'Sir, will you follow me there?' 'My personal service,' I replied, 'should attend your majesty to the utmost; but I cannot answer that the king, my master, would go quite so far with you. How would your majesty act when you were driven to that extremity?' 'I would,' she said, 'send the king of Prussia a challenge to meet me in a post-chaise, with musket, powder, and ball; thus would we decide the quarrel in person.' 'She would have kept her word,' added the duke. I said that she was a great lady, a charming handsome lady, but that her favours were rather dear to those she honoured with them; that England could show an account of above forty millions. He laughed, saying, that their balance was likewise very great.

"The duke's intimate union with Madame de Pompadour, and his first introduction into the ministry (when he was joined to cardinal Bernis), has arisen from his sacrificing to her another lady, who was in terms with the king, for immediately supplying her place. I have heard that there are moments in which his majesty does not forgive the part he acted on that occasion, and that he has likewise sometimes been displeased at the familiarity with which the duke treats him. But his excellency always has three circumstances greatly in his favour:—

"First, no man living wants amusement so much as the king of France. M. de Choiseul has the talent

of entertaining him, being indeed of the most lively and cheerful conversation that I have met with.

"Secondly, He continues to carry on all his affairs with the least personal fatigue or trouble imaginable to his majesty.

"Thirdly, He has so decided a resolution in everything which relates to his own power or influence, that he braves and subdues all those who would oppose him.

"The empress-queen writes private letters to Madame Pompadour, in which she calls her *ma cousine*, she being now a duchess. When the count of Kaunitz proposed this style of corresponding to her, he made some excuses for requiring so great a condescension. The queen replied only: 'Why should I make any scruple; have not I flattered Farinelli?'

"One day, as M. de Choiseul was conversing with Madame de Pompadour upon my treaty, she said, that she had made a promise, with regard to a certain point, to the empress-queen. His excellency replied, 'Bon, promesses de femmes.'"

In truth, however, the negotiations for peace made no progress; on the contrary, Spain and France had already conducted an offensive and defensive alliance on the 15th August, which, however, was considered and treated at first as a profound secret. Yet the English government observed, that the conduct of Spain became more and more cold and equivocal. On which account Lord Bristol put the question * to Mr. Wall, the Spanish minister: "Whether the court of Madrid intended to join the French, and even to act hostilely against Great Britain, or to depart in

* Dispatch of 29th December, 1761. Mitchell papers, vol. xvi.

any manner from its neutrality: a categorical answer is expected; otherwise a refusal to comply will be looked upon as an aggression on the part of Spain, and a declaration of war." Wall answered*:—"The spirit of haughtiness and of discord which dictated this inconsiderate step, and which, for the misfortune of mankind, still reigns so much in the British government, is what made, in the same instant, the declaration of war, and attacked the king's dignity. Your excellency may think of retiring when and in the manner that is convenient to you, which is the only answer that, without detaining you, his majesty has ordered me to give you."

Meantime the Portuguese ambassador in London, on the ground of more accurate information of the contents of the treaty †, had already applied for assistance, and, on the 4th January, 1762, England declared war against Spain. In this it was fully justified; for the boasting, the pretexts, and petty grounds of complaints, were brought forward by the court of Madrid only to cover its own hostile sentiments and even hostile acts. The refusal to give an answer to the English question reminds us of the conduct of Austria in the year 1756, only the court of Vienna was more prudent in the choice of its words, and, with an equal desire for war, had not concluded a formal treaty against Prussia, as Spain had, in fact, done against England.

However just the war declared by England against Spain might be, King Frederick indirectly suffered by it, insomuch as he could the less reckon upon British assistance in Germany, while the danger

* Mitchell papers, vol. xvi. Dispatch of 30th December.
† Dispatch of 29th December.

from Russia and Austria pressed harder upon him, and the disproportion of his resources to those of the enemy become more and more evident. Some detached passages from Mitchell's papers will throw a light on this subject.

"The death of George II. on the 25th October, 1760, was by no means a happy event for king Frederick. After speaking in praise of him to Mitchell, he added: 'But you do not know, perhaps, that his late majesty had the goodness and magnanimity to pardon me the foolish verses which I wrote against him*.'

"The Russians in Silesia have committed all sorts of enormities and cruelties†. It is reported that there have been misunderstandings and jealousies between the Austrian and Russian generals, arising partly from their disagreeing about the division of a contribution raised in Silesia, and partly from that antipathy which the Russian officers in general bear to the Austrians, who affect a sort of superiority which the others cannot brook."

"On the 1st October, Schweidnitz was taken‡. What the consequences may be is far beyond my reach to conjecture, but I flatter myself that the king, whose genius seems to acquire new vigour from adversity, will still be able to establish affairs in Silesia."

"In the Prussian army every commander of a regiment is accurately acquainted with the strength of it§. The information respecting it goes to the king, and comes then into the hands of the adjutant-

* The 3rd July, 1761. Mitchell papers, vol. xxviii.

† The 15th September, 1761. Ibid., vol. v.

‡ The 10th October. Ibid.

§ The 25th November. Ibid.

general. But the accounts are concealed from all the other generals, so that the king and the adjutant are the only persons that know exactly the real and effective strength of the whole army; and this secret, which is considered as one of the mysteries of the military art, has hitherto been very carefully kept. The king, in every campaign and in all his armies, has discouraged correspondence upon military affairs. The letters are often stopped and examined, and officers suffer for their imprudence."

"Accounts come from all quarters* of the great devastations and the misery which the Russians and Austrians have brought upon Pomerania, Silesia, and the Mark. Besides this, the debasement of the coin in Germany affords an infinite fund for dissension†, fraud, and chicane, equally ruinous to the sovereign and to the subject."

Frederick was sensible how difficult,—nay, how desperate, his situation was; thought seriously of death, and on the 1st December, 1761, wrote a speech of the Emperor Otho, after the battle of Bedriacum, and on the 8th December, a speech of Cato before his death‡. We are entitled to believe that if he had not met with death on the field of battle, he was resolved, in case of extremity, to die by his own hand.

It is unnecessary to enumerate and enforce in this place the irrefragable arguments of Christianity against suicide; but those who bear with great tranquillity the disgrace of an unworthy life have no right, on this account, to represent themselves as good Christians. Nay, even those who would wil-

* The 25th November. † The 8th December.
‡ Œuvres posthumes, viii. 26. 36.

lingly spin out to eternity the thread of their empty and insignificant existence, have here no right to pass sentence of condemnation, for they do not understand what the question properly is, and measure things essentially different with the same standard. *Duo cum faciunt idem, non est idem.* If a gamester, a bankrupt, no longer able to prolong his extravagant and worthless course of life, puts an end to it in a moment of despair, is he to be placed on a level with Otho, Cato, and Frederick the Second?

The king's task was at an end as soon as he could no longer be a king, no longer a *great* king. For him, a life in dishonour was a complete impossibility. If this assertion implies that the tendency of his life was not perfectly conformable with the Christian mode of thinking and acting, saints may sit in judgment, and condemn him, but not old women of both sexes. Had it been the will of God that Prussia should be reduced to a little electorate without spirit and energy, Frederick was not the man to direct the eternal monotony of the petty machine. Some other person was required for this purpose. Accordingly, he puts the following words into the mouth of Cato:

> 'Le sage avec mépris voit la mort sans la craindre,
> Louez mon action, gardez-vous de me plaindre.
> Quand on voit sa patrie et ses amis périr,
> Un lache y peut survivre, un héros doit mourir.'

But it was otherwise decreed in the book of Fate. This noble monarch, who had dedicated his whole life to the weal of his people, who was about to sacrifice it for them, was not to pass unrewarded from the scene of action; but she was at length sum-

moned away, who had but too long not only personally led an unworthy life, but had governed her people without judgment, and made war upon Prussia without reason. On the 5th January, 1762, died Elizabeth, Czarina of Russia.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Death of the Empress Elizabeth—Peter III. and Catherine—Measures of the Government—Elizabeth—Woronzow—Lestocq—Lord Bute—Altered Policy of England—Frederick II. to George III.—Frederick and Peter III.—Frederick's Hopes.

"THE empress Elizabeth," writes Mr. Keith on the 5th January*, "died this afternoon about two o'clock. She was attacked on Saturday last, in the evening, with a violent hemorrhage, and from that moment her life was despaired of; however weak, she retained all her senses. But yesterday, finding herself going, she sent for the great duke and duchess, and took leave of them with great marks of tenderness, and spoke several things with great presence of mind, and with equal resignation.

"As soon as the empress had breathed her last, the senate and the other supreme colleges of the empire, who were assembled in the palace for that purpose, took the oaths to the emperor Peter III., and then the regiments of guards, according to their rank, who were drawn up before the windows. All passed with the greatest order and tranquillity."

* Russia, vol. lxxi.

Three days later Keith continues* :—"On the 7th January the new sovereign received the compliments of the ambassadors, after which there was a dinner of a hundred persons, where everybody drew for their places, the emperor and empress included. The emperor came to me, and whispered to me, smiling, that he hoped I would be pleased with him now, as the night before he had dispatched couriers to the several leaders of the army, with orders not to advance further into the Prussian territories, and to abstain from all hostilities."

Keith having intimated that he wanted money, the English government placed 100,000*l.* at his disposal, and let him know verbally the objects for which he was to employ it†.

On the 12th January Keith continues‡ :—"All goes well. The emperor makes no secret of his intention to conclude peace with Prussia, and manifests his aversion to France, and to everything that comes from thence, and in consequence, has absolutely dismissed the company of French comedians from his service.

"With respect to the interior of the empire, the emperor's conduct hitherto has been such, as deservedly has acquired the love and respect of his subjects. His favours have been bestowed upon very worthy persons, and have been conferred in the most gracious manner; and no one hardship of any kind has been put upon any person. The few even that have lost their places have fallen in the gentlest manner. Old Lestocq and some others have been set at liberty. The chancellor Woronzow enjoys

* Dispatch of 8th June. Russia, vol. lxxi.
† Ditto of 6th February. Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

the highest favour, and Count Gallizin has been appointed vice-chancellor.

"Business of all kinds goes much quicker than formerly*. The emperor enters into every branch himself, and in some affairs gives the proper orders, according to the representations brought him from the respective colleges, or the petitions of private persons; he also takes part in and decides upon foreign affairs. On Thursday, having gone in great state to the senate for the first time, he did there declare the nobility and gentry of Russia to be in every respect free, on the same footing with the nobility of other kingdoms in Europe, with the liberty to enter into the service or not, at their choice, and without any restraint of any kind; only that they shall not enter into the service of any foreign power without the permission of the emperor or his successors. Your lordship may imagine with what astonishment and pleasure the nobility received the unexpected and royal boon, and with what inward satisfaction they felt themselves in one morning from slaves become free men, that is to say, really gentlemen.

"The emperor has also afforded relief to the poor by reducing the prices of salt. These acts of grace and magnanimity cannot fail of gaining the hearts of the subjects, and at the same time will raise the emperor's character to the highest point of esteem in all Europe.

"The emperor talked very slightingly of the king of Poland, and with great invectives against Count Brühl; he called Kaunitz, and Bestucheff, and

* Dispatch of 30th January. Russia, vol. lxxi.

Brühl, the three greatest incendiaries who had kindled the flame over Europe.

"It does not appear that the empress has any great degree of credit*, and the countess Elizabeth Woronzow, niece to the chancellor, though a declared mistress, does not, I believe, meddle in business.

"Count Lestocq, though at the age of seventy-four years, has, after an imprisonment and exile of fourteen years†, brought back with him the vivacity of a man of twenty-five. The Münnichs, both father and son, are also set at liberty, and hopes are entertained for the Biron family."

The accession of Peter III. was an invaluable advantage to Frederick II. At the first, however, the king had some doubts of the turn that Russian policy might take, and nearly, at the same time, fell into a disagreement with England.

After Pitt's retirement, and under the government of Lord Bute, unpleasant negotiations began on the payment of subsidies, and a separate peace‡. Thus, for instance, the English government acted as if Frederick had entered into separate negotiations for peace with Austria, of which there is such an entire want of proofs, that it may be considered as a mere pretext. On this account Mitchell writes on the 21st January:—"The king's aversion to the court of Vienna has increased in proportion to his misfortunes, as appears by many of his actions, which seem rather to be guided by passion and resentment than by the dictates of reason and policy.

* Dispatch of 30th January. Russia, vol. lxxi.

† Ditto of 12th February. Ibid.

‡ Dispatches of 12th and 21st January. Mitchell Papers, vol. vi.

"If I was less acquainted with the king of Prussia's character, and considered only the desperate state of his affairs, I should certainly conclude that he was endeavouring by every means to procure a peace that might save himself and his family from the imminent danger that threatens them. And though I never imagined the king of Prussia to be so extremely scrupulous, as not to make use of the plea of necessity when it can serve his purpose; yet I think he has too good an understanding to risk the loss of the only ally he has, and of the only support he can have, by attempting an absurdity; I mean, to treat without the king of England's knowledge, and to his exclusion with the court of Vienna."

Meantime the news of the death of the empress Elizabeth was received, and Mitchell writes:—"Count Finkenstein thinks it impossible to determine what turn the court of Russia will take. The great duke and duchess have hitherto declared friendship for the king of Prussia. Whether the same sentiments may continue after they ascend the throne cannot yet be known. One thing I cannot help fearing, that the king of Prussia's lively imagination, which generally carries him too far, may on this occasion lead him to abandon all thoughts of peace, if ever he had any."

The English ambassador Keith, at Petersburg, again received instructions to act in favour of Prussia. Mitchell writes to him:—"When you dispatch a messenger, be as minute and particular as possible in your relation, both as to things and persons. You know the insatiable curiosity of the king of Prussia."

This curiosity was, in his situation, extremely na-

tural; for the instructions given by him show, as we have stated, that he did not know what course the Russian court would take. To the compliments of congratulation are added only general wishes and proposals to put an end to the war. "The king would wish that Mr. Keith, on making this compliment to the emperor, would adroitly intimate that his majesty always considered him as his old friend, who had never taken any part in the origin of the present troubles, and that the sentiments of the king towards him having never varied, he would be charmed to put an end to the differences, &c. That his majesty would wish Mr. Keith would not only pay the same compliments to the empress of Russia, but also enlarge more particularly to that princess on the sentiments of personal friendship and confidence in her, and the reliance which his majesty had ever placed on her, and the king's persuasion that she would take pleasure in co-operating to terminate the present war."

About the same time Frederick wrote (22nd of January, 1762) to the king of England*:—"Sir, my brother,—The length of the last campaign and various circumstances which have since occurred, have hindered me from writing before to your majesty. Now the empress of Russia is dead, and the great duke, who has at all times expressed his friendship to me, is on the throne. I am persuaded that, if Mr. Keith knows how to take advantage of these circumstances, he may very easily profit by them. For my part, I have no doubt that this year will be more fortunate than the preceding, and that we shall be able to force our enemies to conditions of peace,

* State-paper Office. Royal Letters, vol. xvii.

more honourable for us than the arrogant laws which they wanted to prescribe to us. The declaration of war by the Spaniards is, in my opinion, advantageous to England, because the great superiority of the British fleet will triumph over the Spaniards, as it has over the French.

"What glory will it be for the reign of your majesty, thereby to render your nation the undisputed mistress of the seas, and for all of us, to have maintained our ground against the united force of all Europe! Nothing is wanting but a little perseverance and firmness to terminate this fatal war to the advantage of England and her allies; but we must persevere to the end. I still see innumerable difficulties; they animate instead of discouraging me, by the hopes of conquering them. Nobody takes more interest than I do in the glory and prosperity of your majesty. I beg you to be convinced of it, as well as of the high esteem with which I am," &c.

At length a letter from Keith and a letter from Peter III. for Frederick arrived, which showed the entire change of the Russian policy, and the emperor's friendship for the king *. "I wish," writes Mitchell, "I had been present when the king received Keith's letter, to observe the effect it had on him. I really believe it is the only letter he perhaps ever received that exceeded his expectations, and surpassed even his powers of imagination. For my part I cannot help considering this great and unexpected event as an indication that Providence is resolved in the last hour to save the king."

On the 4th Frederick wrote to Count Finken-

* Dispatches of 30th and 31st January, 1762. Mitchell Papers, vol. vi.

stein *:—"Mr. Mitchell is requested to caution Mr. Keith not flatly to contradict the new emperor. When he expresses his sentiments towards the Danes, we know that there is nothing of greater moment than that we should be speedily reconciled with Russia, that we may retreat from the ridge of the precipice. If Mr. Keith at this moment should warmly oppose the views of the emperor in this respect, he would offend him, and run the risk of irritating him, and spoiling everything at the very outset, of which our enemies would take advantage to draw him over to their party, by promising him everything. There is a time for all things. At present our own affairs are the most urgent. Time will bring about the rest."

To another letter to Mitchell, on the affairs of Russia, Frederick added with his own hand *:—"Here we have a singular knight" (the emperor Peter, who had desired and received the order of the black eagle), "who supports 80,000 men at my expense. He is the only one of my knights who takes that liberty. If every knight of the garter did as much, your England would be eaten up. I beg you to render my knight more docile, and to inform him that it is contrary to the statutes of the order for a knight to devour his grand master."

This jesting is a proof of the king's good humour. Mitchell, however, complains that the king was not always cautious in writing ‡, and that in his letters to learned men, particularly to D'Argens, which were shown about, he sometimes made political communications. The Prussian ministers were too timid,

* Dispatches of 30th and 31st January, 1762. Mitchell Papers, vol. vi.
† The 17th February. Ibid. ‡ The 23rd February. Ibid.

notwithstanding Mitchell's request, to make any observations to the king on the subject.

After Bute and Grenville were at the head of the English administration, there appeared less courage and firmness in the prosecution of the war than before. The attention of the king of Prussia was called to the necessity of a reconciliation with Austria*. So long as Elizabeth lived there was no opportunity of effecting it. But scarcely had her death relieved the king from the greatest distress, when Lord Bute wrote to Mr. Keith at Petersburg†:—"In the midst of the present happy appearances his majesty (king of England) can have but one apprehension, which is, lest the zealous affection of the emperor to the king of Prussia's cause, should hurry him into such measures, as, by encouraging that prince's ambitious and warlike spirit, may tend to the continuance of the hostile plans of proceeding, to which the king is above all things desirous to put a speedy end. Your opinion that the empress is not like to have any great credit in the present reign, was very unexpected here."

The manner in which Lord Bute manifested in an undiplomatic manner his longing for peace, only gave his adversaries new courage; nay, Austria entirely declined any communications on the subject. "The empress-queen," writes Kaunitz ‡, "and her ministers, cannot conceive what this confidential communication of England, as it is called, properly means; for which reason it may easily be conceived that we are here unable to give an answer to it."

* Letters of 8th January and 6th February. Mitchell Papers, v. xvii.
† The 26th February. Russia, vol. lxxi.
‡ The 3rd March, 1762. Mitchell Papers, vol. xvii.

In this state of things Frederick wrote, on the 12th of March, 1762, the following letter from Breslau, to the king of England:—

"Sir, my brother,—The accounts which come from Petersburg, since the death of the empress, are so favourable, that I joyfully communicate them to your majesty. The new emperor is entirely inclined to peace. The care of Mr. Keith has much contributed to cherish this favourable disposition. I have sent Baron Goltz to St. Petersburg, with the commission to compliment that prince on his accession to the throne, and he is at the same time intrusted with full powers to sign a treaty of peace, if the emperor consents. This negotiation passes through the hands of Mr. Keith. England has not been at war with Russia, and your majesty's interests cannot suffer by this peace; so that I have no reproach to make myself; and I am even persuaded that your majesty will be very glad of this event. This is the grand separate alliance: it is a very important article, if with this we succeed in vigorously pushing the court of Vienna. It must at length adopt more moderate sentiments than it has hitherto shown, and its consent to peace will infallibly lead to that of France.

"I have always considered the queen of Hungary as the promoter of the present war; and your majesty will see that the war will not finish till that princess begins to be afraid for her own dominions. I wish I may always have agreeable news to tell your majesty. I, however, beg you to believe that nobody takes a greater part than I do in your interests. Being, with the greatest attachment, Sir, my brother, your majesty's," &c. &c.

"FREDERICK."

These and similar representations of Frederick did not, however, render the English ministry more favourable. Bute complains that the king negotiated at Petersburg without accurately informing England *. England had, however, done the same with respect to France; and besides, it was natural that Frederick should, in the first place, make use of his personal influence with Peter, and not suffer himself to be dictated to by Bute.

Hereupon Bute declared † that the parliament would not grant the king any money this year; that this, however, was not caused by ill-will, but by necessity. Besides, Frederick's situation, it was alleged, was so much improved, that he might be reminded of his former declaration, that he would not receive money from his allies, except in case of extreme necessity‡; that France had begun the war against Germany only on account of Frederick's going to war; that England had carried on the war in Germany, only for Prussia, and had borne the greater share of the burthen.

With respect to these assertions it may be observed:—

First, Frederick's situation was by no means so improved, as to render it advisable not to make use of every means for supporting the war.

Secondly, Frederick's demand of subsidies was founded on treaties, and what Bute called impossible or necessary, would probably not have been called so by Chatham.

Thirdly, France made war in Germany essentially against Hanover and England; and Prussia bore,

* Letter of 9th April, Mitchell Papers. vol. xvii.
† Letter of 26th May. Ibid. ‡ Letter of 31st August. Ibid.

for seven years together, the greatest burthen in proportion.

In this situation Frederick wrote to Mitchell on the 17th of April, 1762 *:—"Kings, princes, and emperors have, I believe, agreed together to turn my poor head. In such a state, my dear Sir, one cannot think freely or gaily, but gloomily and misanthropically."

To the Marquis d'Argens he wrote †:—"All that is passing in Russia could not have been foreseen by Count Kaunitz. All that has passed in England, of the most odious part of which you are ignorant, could not enter into my combinations."

On the 20th of May, 1762, the king wrote to Mitchell ‡:—"I have no doubt of your good and honourable sentiments, my dear Mr. Mitchell. I could wish that everybody thought in the same manner; the world would be all the happier for it, and men more virtuous. Fortune begins to change towards me; I hope she may so continue to the end of the year. Then we shall obtain this winter an honourable, and if God will, a durable peace."

The fulfilment of this hope depended essentially upon Russia; but things occurred there which neither Frederick nor Kaunitz could foresee.

* Mitchell Papers, vol. xl.
† The 19th June, 1762. Œuvres Posth., vol. x. p. 258.
‡ Mitchell Papers, vol. xl.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Russia and Austria—Peter's veneration for Frederick II.—Iwan III. —Unworthy Favourites—Peter's overthrow and Death—Comparison of the Characters of Catherine and Mary Queen of Scots—Discontent in Russia—Fêtes at Court—Catherine's skill in Government.

To illustrate the important events in Russia, I give extracts in chronological order, which, from their variety, are doubly instructive.

"The emperor's birth-day," writes Keith *, "was celebrated with much magnificence on the 21st of February. There were one hundred and twenty persons present,—only the empress was wanting. She has a fluxion in her face, and a slight fever.

"The court of Vienna designated Peter's measures with respect to Prussia as a precipitate step, and called Frederick II. the hereditary enemy of Russia†. The emperor said this expression with respect to Russia was foolish, nor had he changed his opinion, but always expressed the same sentiments. Austria offered money and assistance against Denmark. The emperor answered, he did not want money, and hoped to settle his quarrels alone; or he would seek assistance rather in some other place than in Vienna.

"If I can form any judgment of the emperor's temper, it is not proper to thwart him in his vivacity, but rather by seeming to approve his sentiments to gain him, by means of which his majesty, who is open to reason, especially when it comes from friends, may be diverted from entering on

* Dispatch of 23rd February. Russia, vol. lxxi.

† Dispatch of the same day. Ibid.

hasty or violent measures. The empress has little influence; nay, it is now generally known that she is not only not consulted on matters of business, but that even in private affairs it is not the readiest way of succeeding to make one's addresses to her majesty*.

"The emperor's friendship, I might call it passion, for the king of Prussia, is above all expression; and nothing would be so likely to make the emperor fly off, as the smallest appearance of indifference towards that monarch or his interest †.

"The emperor has annexed the monastery lands through the whole empire to the crown, and in lieu thereof has assigned to the archbishops and abbots respectively, certain fixed pensions, and a certain sum for the maintenance of the monks ‡.

"His majesty has likewise been pleased to disband the famous Life Company, with the choice to the gentlemen of whom that corps was composed, to be provided for in the army, according to their several ranks, or to retire upon half-pay. There are not half a dozen of them who have chosen the former.

"The emperor saw Iwan III., and found him a full grown man, but in a state of imbecility. His conversation was wild and unconnected; and amongst other things he said that he was not the person he passed for: that prince having been taken up to heaven long since, but that, however, he would support all the pretensions of the person whose name he bears §.

* Dispatch of 19th March. Russia, vol. lxxi.
† Dispatch of 19th March. Russia, vol. lxxi. Mitchell Papers, vol. xxii.
‡ Dispatch of 9th March. Russia, vol. lxxi.
Dispatch of 16th April. Mitchell Papers, vol. xxii.

"There is reason to regret the influence of a set of worthless favourites, whom the emperor has unfortunately about him. His imperial majesty has thrown himself into the hands of the worst people; and the French gain more and more influence with him *. The resumption of the church-lands has occasioned the greatest discontent over the empire. The empress appeared on her birth-day, the 2nd of May, and had a drawing-room, but did not appear at the evening party with the emperor. On the 11th of May, however, both dined together in a large company †.

"Woronzow, who is often ill, loses his influence, and his assistant, Wolkow, acquires all the power, because he never contradicts the emperor. The complaints of the resumption of the church-lands increase, since the emperor has given orders to put the sons of priests in the army; both seculars and regulars join in the complaints ‡.

"On the 22nd June the emperor had a grand review, and commanded with his spontoon in his hand. The empress saw the review from a window §."

Though these fragments confirm what is already known, we are surprised (like Mr. Keith) by the succeeding events. On the 12th July he writes:—

"Last Friday morning, about nine o'clock, as I was preparing to go to Peterhof to meet the emperor, one of my servants came running into my room, with a frightened countenance, and told me

* Dispatches of 23rd April and 6th June. Mitchell Papers, vol. xxii.

† Dispatch of 4th May. On the 20th May the empress was still considered to be ill. Russia, vol. lxxi.

‡ Dispatch of 7th June. Ibid. vol. lxxii.

§ Dispatch of 22nd June. Ibid.

that there was a great uproar at the other end of the town, and that the guards, having mutinied, were assembled, and talked of nothing less than dethroning the emperor.

"About a quarter of an hour after, I received the news that the empress was in town, and that the guards and other troops had declared her as their empress and sovereign, and that she was actually at the Casanskai church to hear the Te Deum sung upon that occasion. The soldiers and the colleges had already sworn allegiance to her.

"This surprising revolution was brought about in little more than two hours, without one drop of blood being spilt, or any act of violence committed. All the quarters of this city at any distance from the palace, and especially the street where I and the most part of his majesty's subjects reside, were as quiet as if nothing had happened. The only novelty to be seen were some piquets placed at the bridges, and some of the horse-guards patrolling through the streets, in order to preserve the public tranquillity.

"As soon as the guards were assembled in the morning, several detachments were sent to the Peterhof road, to hinder any intelligence from being sent to the emperor; and this piece of duty was performed with so much diligence, that no one person got through, except the master of the horse, Mr. Narischkin.

"About ten o'clock in the evening the empress marched out of town on horseback, at the head of twelve or fourteen thousand men and a great train of artillery, and took the road to Peterhof in order to attack the emperor at that palace, or at Oranienbaum, or wherever they could meet him; and next

day, in the afternoon, the account came of his majesty's having surrendered his person and resigned his crown without one stroke being struck.

"The few circumstances of this great event, that I have been able to pick up, and which appear to be authentic, though I will not warrant them all, are as follow; namely, that this affair had been long contriving, but was hastened in the execution by one of the conspirators having been arrested two days before, upon some rash words that had fallen from him. For fear of the whole being discovered, they had come to the resolution of going immediately to work, and in consequence had sent Mr. Orlow, one of three brothers, officers of the guards, to apprize the empress of this circumstance, and to represent to her the necessity of her returning to town without loss of time; that this gentleman had got to Peterhof between three and four o'clock in the morning, and having got admittance to her majesty's bedchamber, had informed her of her danger, upon which she had, as soon as she was dressed, slipped out of the palace by a back door, and under the conduct of Orlow, without one servant of either sex, had, after some accidents, such as their horses being tired and knocked up, got to town about six o'clock, and went directly to the casernes of the Ismailowsky guards, which she found under arms ready to receive her, with their colonel the hetman Rasumowski at their head; that her majesty thence proceeded to the Simonowski regiment, and then to the Preobrasinsky, and was by the whole conducted to the palace, where everything passed in the manner above mentioned.

"I must observe that the regiment of horse-guards,

of which Prince George was colonel, was among the first that appeared in the revolt, and showed the greatest animosity against their colonel and the late government; that all the troops took the oath without hesitation, except some of the officers of the emperor's own regiment of cuirassiers, who refused it at first, and some of them, I believe, are still under arrest for persisting in their refusal.

"As for the emperor, he had not the smallest information nor the least suspicion of this affair, till between eleven and twelve o'clock, when, being on the way between Oranienbaum and Peterhof, he was met by a servant, sent on by the master of the horse, Narischkin, who informed him how matters stood in town. His majesty proceeded to Peterhof, and there heard the circumstance of the empress leaving that place, which had been concealed till then from the ladies and other courtiers, by her majesty's bedchamber women pretending that the empress was indisposed and in bed. From that moment the unhappy emperor seems to have lost himself, and there was nothing but despair and confusion amongst the small number of his attendants, and no resolution was taken till very late in the evening, that his majesty, with all his train, gentlemen, and ladies, went on board a galley that rode before Peterhof, and rowed over to Cronstadt, in the hope of being received there.

"But the commissioners of the Admiralty sent down from Peterhof had got the start of them, and when the emperor approached the haven, he was not only refused admittance, though he declared who he was, but was threatened to be fired upon. This augmented the confusion and despair, and the

galley, with the other boats, returned to this side, but taking different ways, some to Peterhof and others to Oranienbaum. Amongst the last was the emperor, with a few attendants; and on the morning of Saturday he sent Prince Gallizin, the vice-chancellor, and major-general Ismailow, to the empress, with some proposals. After some time Ismailow returned, with the deed of resignation, which the emperor signed immediately, and then going into a coach with that gentleman, took the road to Peterhof; and has not been seen since, and I have not been able to learn where he has been conducted to. It is said that, in the deed above mentioned, there was a clause, promising the emperor liberty to retire to Holstein.

"Her majesty, after having passed the night at a country-house of Prince Kurakin, returned to town yesterday morning on horseback, and, after having heard mass in the new Admiralty church, which was consecrated that day, went directly to the summer palace, with her son the great duke, and where all sorts of people for some hours were admitted to kiss her hand.

"In the manifesto respecting the motives for the change in the government, the bad peace with Prussia was alleged as a ground of complaint, but the empress immediately sent word to the Prussian ambassador, that she was perfectly well disposed towards cultivating his Prussian majesty's friendship.

"The hetman was, I hear, with Mr. Villebois and Panin the great duke's governor, the principal persons in bringing about this revolution, and under them the brothers Orloff were the most trusted and the most active. But the most singular circum-

stance of the whole is, that the place of rendezvous was the house of the Princess Daschkoff, a young lady not above twenty years of age, daughter of the Count Roman Woronzow, sister to the favourite Elizabeth, and niece to the chancellor. It is certain that she bore a principal share in contriving and carrying on the whole conspiracy, from the beginning to the end of it.

"Of all men, the hetman seemed to possess the greatest share of the unfortunate emperor's affection, and two days before he fell he dined at Marshal Rasumowsky's house, and was upon that occasion received and served with the greatest marks of duty, zeal, and attachment, on the part of both brothers, and when he returned to Oranienbaum, the hetman went straight to Peterhof to concert measures with the empress.

"With regard to the motives of this revolution, it is clear that the taking away the church lands was the principal, joined to the neglect of the clergy. The next was the severe discipline which the emperor endeavoured to introduce among the troops, especially the guards, who had been accustomed to great idleness and leisure, and the discontent among them was heightened by the resolution of carrying a great part of that corps into Germany with him in his expedition against Denmark, which was a measure disagreeable to the whole nation, who stomached greatly their being drawn into new expenses and new dangers for recovering the duchy of Sleswick, which they considered as a trifling object in itself and entirely indifferent to Russia, and that after the emperor had just sacrificed the conquests made by the Russian army, and which might have been of

great importance to their empire, to his friendship for the king of Prussia; which, however, their desire for peace would have not only made them put up with, but approve.

"Several other little circumstances, greatly exaggerated and artfully represented and improved, contributed to the fall of this unhappy prince, who had many excellent qualities, and who never did a violent or cruel action in the course of his short reign, but who, from an abhorrence to business, owing to a bad education and the unhappy choice of favourites, who encouraged him in it, let everything run to confusion, and by a mistaken notion he had conceived of his having secured the affection of the nation by the great favour he had bestowed upon them. After his first mounting the throne, he fell into an indolence and security that proved fatal to him.

"To conclude, not only I, but several persons of sense and discernment, thought they could perceive lately in this prince a considerable change from what he was for some months after his accession, and the perpetual hurry in which he lived, and the flattery he met from the vile people about him, had, in some measure, affected his understanding. The father and the sister of Princess Daschkoff are still under arrest. It is said the emperor wished only three things; his life, and good treatment for his favourite lady, and his aide-de-camp Godowitz."

Of the differences between Peter and his consort no notice is taken in the dispatch of the prudent ambassador, and if the mention of Elizabeth Woronzow indicated it, it does not appear as a chief motive.

On the 20th July Mr. Keith writes*:—"I received from the Russian ministry a paper of the following tenor: 'The imperial ministry of Russia think themselves obliged to inform the foreign ministers, that the ci-devant emperor having had a violent colic, with which he was frequently incommoded, died yesterday. The emperor died at a small country-house belonging to the crown, and his body was transported from thence in the night between Sunday and Monday to the Newsky monastery, where he now lies exposed to public view, and thousands of people crowd thither to see him†. The emperor was buried at Newsky on Wednesday morning, without ceremony. Only those of the five first classes were ordered to attend the funeral."

Whether, and in what manner, the body was shown does not, by any means, appear satisfactory from this account; nay, Keith, being on the point of returning to London, reserved all the particulars for a communication *vivâ voce*. What this was is unknown, and the state-paper office affords no information respecting the events, and the guilt or innocence of Catherine. What Rulhière relates on the subject is well known, but not fully authenticated.

Frederick II. wrote to D'Argens‡: "With respect to this revolution I apprehended it. I even warned the emperor to be on his guard, but his confidence was too great. He was angry when anybody spoke to him of precautions, and I still have the letter which he wrote to me, in answer to the advice which I gave him. His misfortune origin-

* Russia, vol. lxxii. † Dispatch of 23d July. Ibid.
‡ Œuvres Posth., vol. x., p. 306.

ated in his attempt to take certain estates from the clergy; the priests planned the revolution, which was executed immediately. This prince, who possessed all the qualities of the heart that can be desired, had not equal prudence; and much is required to govern that nation. I am informed to-day that he has died of the colic."

To Count Segur Frederick said, "Catherine, crowned and free, thought, like an inexperienced young woman, that all was finished. So pusillanimous an enemy did not seem to her to be dangerous. But the Orloffs, more audacious and more clear-sighted, being unwilling that this prince should be made a rallying point against them, have put him out of the way. The empress was ignorant of this fact, and learnt it with a despair which was not feigned; she correctly foresaw the judgment which all the world now passes upon her; for the error of this judgment is, and must be indelible, since, in her situation, she has reaped the fruits of their crime, and has been obliged, in order to have support, not only to spare, but even to retain about her person the authors of the crime, since they alone had been able to save her."

Darnley and Mary Stuart, Peter and Catherine, mutually remind us of each other, and give occasion for remarkable comparisons. All four are equally liable to the reproach of infidelity to their conjugal engagements. Mary, however, had nothing to fear from Darnley, whereas Catherine had much to fear from Peter: in her therefore a kind of self-defence may certainly be alleged, whereas Mary might very easily have avoided extreme measures. The immediate assent to the murder is besides much

more clearly proved in the case of Mary than in that of Catherine; and whatever may have been her relation to Orloff, she never gave him her hand, and placed him with herself on the throne. On this account Mary's power, notwithstanding all other well-founded claims, fell at once to the ground; whereas Catherine, who had no claim whatever, according to the laws of succession, kept the throne during her life. To these personal actions and relations were added, indeed, very different circumstances in Scotland and in Russia.

On the 20th of August Keith writes *:—"There has been a latent spirit of ill-humour and discontent among the guards, ever since the change, which fermenting by degrees, came at last to such a height, that it broke out one night last week into a sort of open rebellion. The soldiers of the regiment Insemonowsky, having beat to arms at midnight, and were with great difficulty brought to reason by their officers. The same spirit showed itself, though in a less degree, two nights successively, and gave great uneasiness to the government. However, partly by fair means, and partly by foul, great numbers of soldiers and officers have been taken up and carried out of the way. Things are so far settled that the danger for the present seems over."

On the 21st of October, Keith's successor, Buckingham, writes about similar mutinies, but says, that a head is wanting, and they will doubtless be soon put down †.

"Immediately after the late revolution here, the empress sent an express to Poniatowsky to forbid his coming into Russia, but assuring him at the same

* Russia. vol. lxxii. † Ibid.

time of her unceasing regard and friendship *; that in case the crown of Poland should become vacant, she would use her best endeavours to procure it for him, or if that was not possible, for one of the Czartorisky family."

On the 25th of October, Buckingham writes from Moscow:—"The empress seems to have a settled melancholy upon her countenance. She mentioned to me last night in conversation, that she has lately found herself absent in company, and that the habit of it imperceptibly grew upon her, she knew not why.

"Six officers of the guards, who have talked a little too freely, are to be broke this morning with ignominy, and afterwards sent for life into some of the distant provinces †.

"The empress, from all the observations I can make, is in talents, information, and application, greatly superior to everybody in this country. Hampered by the obligations she has lately received, conscious of the difficulties of her situation, and fearful of the dangers with which she must hitherto have thought herself surrounded, she cannot as yet venture to act openly of herself, and get rid of many of those about her whose character and abilities she must despise. She takes every method to gain the confidence and affection of her subjects. If she succeeds she will exert the authority she acquires, to the honour and advantage of the empire ‡.

"The empress (says a dispatch from Moscow of the 3rd February, 1763) behaves as if she thought

* Dispatch of 9th October. Russia, vol. lxxii.
† Dispatch of 8th November from Moscow. Russia, vol. lxxii.
‡ Dispatch of 25th November. Ibid.

herself in perfect security, goes about the streets in an open sledge at night, with very few attendants; and when she goes to the senate, has often only two footmen behind the carriage *.

Notwithstanding public cares and politics, amusements of various kinds went on. "Last night," writes Buckingham on the 10th of February, "was represented a Russian tragedy, which was performed in the palace, before the empress, in a most magnificent hall fitted up for the occasion, with a stage, scenes, and all proper decorations. The subject of the drama was a Russian story; and as far as any judgment may be formed from reading, what speaks itself to be an incorrect French translation, the sentiments and the dialogue would do honour to any author in any country. The Countess Bruce acted the principal part with a spirit, ease, and propriety which are seldom met with, even among those who are bred to the stage. Two other characters were admirably represented by Count Orloff and a son of the late Marshal Schuwaloff. Count Orloff's figure is very striking, and bears some resemblance of the earl of Errol.

"After the play there was an entertainment of dancing performed by the maids of honour and some of the first nobility. I believe so many fine women were never seen upon any stage; and I must add, that few countries could produce them. The countesses Stroganow, Narischkin, and Mademoiselle Sievers, distinguished themselves particularly. The orchestra was composed of gentlemen. The magnificence and elegance of the whole was such, that what may appear a laboured description, is but

* Russia, vol. lxxiii.

barely doing justice to it. When we consider how very few years have elapsed since the polite arts were first introduced in the court, and how considerable a part of that time they have been but little cultivated, it will appear very extraordinary that a performance of this kind can have been planned and executed in a few weeks."

Though we may readily do justice to the improvement of Russia in the above-mentioned respects, the laudatory tone of the preceding dispatch seems rather extraordinary. Another letter of the 14th of February clears up the point, for Buckingham there says,—" I should not have drawn up the account in that manner, did I not know that all the letters were opened: it was, in fact, intended for the empress."

CHAPTER XL.

Negotiations for Peace between England and France—Peace of Paris and Hubertsburg—Frederick's Government in Time of Peace—Complaints respecting him—The Mint—The Excise—Ministers—Frugality—Negotiation with England—Departure of Mitchell—Justification of Frederick—Frederick's religious Views—Opinion respecting Diderot and Helvetius—Connection with Russia.

THOUGH Frederick's plans to compel Austria, by the assistance of Russia, to consent to an honourable peace, fell to the ground through the deposition of Peter, Catherine took care not to continue the impolitic war against Prussia; and the alliance of the three great powers (the consequences of which Frederick had so much feared at the beginning of the war) was hereby dissolved. By the conclusion of

peace between England and France, the latter power also withdrew.

In the instructions to the duke of Bedford (September 4, 1762) for negotiating a treaty of peace, it was said *:—"It has been understood, on both sides, that we should *not* treat of the interests of our respective allies, without their participation. In conformity of that rule, *we propose* to enter into *no* discussion in these preliminaries, which can in any shape affect the right of our good brother and ally, the king of Prussia, to Wesel and Guelders. It is therefore our intention to include the evacuation of those towns and territories by the most Christian king, in the agreement to withdraw our troops on both sides into the dominions of their respective sovereigns, and to stipulate that no succours, either in men or money, shall be given by either of the contracting powers to such of their respective allies as shall continue engaged in the present war in Germany."

To this the French replied *, that with regard to succours of money they could not enter into that stipulation on account of their engagements with the court of Vienna, and therefore I insisted on reserving to the king the same power with respect to his majesty's allies in Germany. But soon afterwards the two powers let drop this apparent point of honour, so that Prussia and Austria remained alone in the field. Prussia was undoubtedly in a more favourable situation than before, and Austria had less prospect than ever in recovering Silesia. But the king, who was weary of the war, was very willing to enter into

* France, vol. cxxiv.
† Dispatch of 24th September. Ibid.

negotiations. Mitchell wonders, without reason, at the sudden change in the sentiments of Prussia and Austria, and the facility of making peace *. That change and facility proceeded from the alteration in all the affairs of Europe. "The king, in several of his letters, has expressed the highest satisfaction with the court of Vienna for the open and candid manner in which the treaty has been negotiated."

The king, too, was at that time more dissatisfied with the conduct of the friend who drew back, than with that of his reconciled enemy. In some letters, however, he expresses, in polite terms, his satisfaction with England †.

On the 3rd November, 1762, the preliminaries of peace were signed at Fontainbleau, and on the 10th February, 1763, the treaty of Paris was concluded between England and France. On the 30th December, 1762, the negotiations at Hubertsburg began, and peace was concluded on the 15th February. Seven long years of war made no change in the rights and the possessions of the several parties. The importance and the interest of the war depend, therefore, upon the manner in which it was conducted, in the elevation and meanness which kings, statesmen, generals, and armies, did or did not manifest.

It must be owned that King Frederick often derived advantage from the incapacity and disunion of his many enemies, and often, too, from that which, in the ordinary way of speaking, we call chance; but to deny him, on that account, great abilities as

* Dispatch of 5th March, 1763. Mitchell Papers, vol. vi.

† Dispatch of 9th March and 1st April, 1763. Ibid. vol. xl.

a statesman and a general, is one of those foolish notions by which little people love to depreciate great men. Frederick II. was, and always will be, the greatest character of that age; he and Prussia had acquired importance in the history of the world; a focus of eternal glory at which, in times of subsequent degradation, the flames of victorious enthusiasm were again kindled.

During the war people had been accustomed to expect almost impossibilities from him, and still more was required of him after the conclusion of peace. When, therefore, every wish was not immediately fulfilled, every evil removed, there was no want of bitter complaints of various kinds. Some notice is taken of them in Mr. Mitchell's dispatches, as the following extracts show:—

"The king applies with great assiduity and vigour to government, which, during his absence, has sunk into a state of anarchy and confusion*. I am sorry to say that the king has yet done nothing to correct the source of that evil which arises chiefly from the debasement of the money, and from the different species of false coin actually current in the country, by which some Jews concerned in the coinage and a few bankers have raised immense fortunes, but the honest and industrious part of his subjects are reduced to the greatest extremity, and the country is exhausted of all specie†. Nothing the king ever did has so much disgusted and alienated the affections of his people as the rash and inconsiderate steps he has taken with regard to the

* Dispatch of 9th April, 1763. Mitchell papers, vol. vi.
† Dispatch of 15th April. Ibid.

coin. Jews and Christians are striving with equal zeal and ardour, who shall share in the spoils of the people, but it is hoped the king's wisdom, sagacity, and penetration, will disappoint the flagitious designs of the money-brokers of whatever denomination*.

"Several of the merchants and others enriched by the war have erected triumphal arches and other expensive fireworks, loaded with inscripticns in praise of their sovereign. In the meantime, the people want bread, and having long felt the calamities of war, are grown mutinous, and almost outrageous. A few days ago written papers were affixed to the corners of some of the most noted streets in this capital, in which the king is treated as a tyrant, and deserving the fate of Peter III., complaining of oppression, and calling for the redress of grievances, which they say they hope for from the humanity of Prince Henry. As this is hitherto wisely concealed from the king, whose vivacity of resentment might lead him still greater lengths, no search is making for the authors of these malicious libels†. The ministers have not the courage to report to their master what is told them, and much less dare they insinuate what may be the consequences of a rash or false step‡. He is impatient of contradiction, and receives too easily impressions that flatter or coincide with his present passion, and experience has shown to me how difficult it is for that monarch to vanquish even his ill-grounded prejudices. He is

* Dispatch of 18th April, 1763, and 7th January, 1764.

† Dispatch of 19th April.

‡ Dispatches of 27th March, 8th May, and 26th June, 1764. Mitchell papers, vol. vii.

naturally of a suspicious temper. Though upon some occasions he laughs at all formalities, yet no man is more tenacious of them in whatever he thinks touches his rank, dignity, and consideration*.

"Count Borcke, governor of the prince of Prussia, had spoken in a company upon the nature and the effects of war, and the calamities occasioned to mankind in general†. This was reported to the king with some exaggerations, on which account he turned the conversation at table to the subject. Though Borcke here expressed himself in more moderate terms, the king fell into a violent passion, and told him that, with such sentiments, he was unworthy to wear the uniform of a major-general and much more to be about his nephew; so he was dismissed.

"The king's economy has increased of late to such a degree as to deserve another name‡; it extends to the meanest trifles§. He is often rough and out of humour, but, indeed, his dominions are exhausted to such a degree, that the bare description would move the hardest heart.

"The king has caused investigations to be made into the embezzlement of public money. As the people against whom this inquiry is making are chiefly strangers, adventurers, and projectors of new taxes, they have incurred the greatest odium, and the people call loudly for vengeance‖.

"Great confusion in the domestic affairs has arisen from many alterations the king has made for some

*Dispatch of 21st August. Mitchell Papers, vol. vii.

† Dispatch of 24th March. Ibid.

‡ Dispatch of 21st April and 23d June. Ibid.

§ Dispatches of 3rd and 9th May, 1763. Ibid., vols. vi. and vii.

‖ Dispatches of 6th and 17th September, and 1st November, 1766. Ibid., vol. vii.

time in the manner of raising his taxes and of augmenting his revenue, by adopting several schemes offered by projectors and adventurers, most of which are found to be pernicious and impracticable. This disappointment sits heavily on his mind, and has affected his temper. The representations of his subjects, however well-founded and conveyed to him in the most respectful terms, and in the humblest manner, have hitherto not had any effect, and so far from softening him, rather do confirm him in his resolution of pursuing measures which, in the opinion of those who best understand the state of this country, cannot fail of being fatal to the commerce, industry, and credit of his dominions*.

"The directors of the new excise, mostly recommended†, as is said, by Helvetius, are all Frenchmen of low condition, and totally ignorant of the language, manners, and customs of this country. Three of them, as I have been informed, were bankrupts, of whom M. de Candi was one. He, however, had a dispute with Launay, and was shot by him. The new projects of the excise give the utmost dissatisfaction to the subjects, and have really alienated the affections of the people from their sovereign to a degree hardly to be described‡."

To these observations on the internal administration are added others relative to political affairs. Thus England endeavoured to unite with Russia and Prussia, in order to oppose the Bourbon family compact§. "Frederick remarked upon this subject:

* Dispatch of 15th November. Mitchell Papers, vol. vii.

† Dispatch of 27th December, 1766. Ibid.

‡ Dispatch of 4th June, 1768. Ibid.

§ Dispatch of 17th September, 1766. Ibid.

Alliances made with a view to distant events are, for the most part, merely matters of ostentation, and rarely produce any other effect than that of imposing for a short time on the adverse party.' He then repeated an Italian proverb: 'Chi sta bene non si muove.' Mitchell answered: 'Chi sta solo non sta bene.' The king then hinted at the treatment he had met with from us when the last peace was made, and talked of the instability of our measures and sudden changes in our administration, which made it almost impossible to transact business with us with any sort of security. I answered as well as I could."

England having renewed in December, 1766*, its proposal for the triple alliance, the king answered:—"The alliance proposed, so far from contributing to public tranquillity, may be the means of interrupting it, and that suddenly, as it cannot fail to excite jealousy in the other powers of Europe, and lead them to unite themselves, perhaps, more strictly together than they are at present. Things are now quiet; I wish they may long continue so. Associations of different powers, upon a general plan, are seldom of long duration, and seldom produce a good effect. Circumstances vary so fast, that there is hardly any possibility of making provision in a general treaty for events that may happen. When the storm seems to be rising, and clouds begin to appear, then, and not till then, is the time for uniting together and concerting measures to ward off the impending danger. I am, therefore, unwilling to enter into schemes that may occasion new wars."

* Dispatch of 4th December. Mitchell Papers, vol. vii.

"With respect to France, the king said, 'That, though he made no doubt the French were meditating revenge, to recover the honour they had lately lost in the field, as well as by treaty, they were not yet, however, in a condition to execute their plans, by reason of the disorder of their affairs. Neither did he imagine they would make Germany the seat of action, as they were heartily sick of that country; not only because of their ill-success, but also on account of the immense expense it had put them to, during the last war; that, besides, they could more effectually hurt the interest and trade of England by carrying their arms elsewhere.' The king concluded that, in all probability, the first war that broke out would be in a part of the world where he could be of little use.

"As I made allusions on the danger of the king from Austria, he replied, 'I well understand what you allude to. If I am attacked, I am ready to defend myself, and you have seen what I can do.' I answered, that I had been an eye-witness to his doing what, I believed, no man but him could have done, but still there was great danger in repeating the experiment."

The latter might, however, be said for Austria also, and this similarity of experience and apprehension afforded a security for the duration of peace. Thus the negotiations attempted on the part of England led to no result.

Before this time, when Mitchell was to leave Berlin, the king wrote to him*:—"I am very sorry, my dear Mitchell, that your recal entirely separates

* The 25th June, 1765. Mitchell Papers, vol. xl.

us; however, the memory of your good conduct and of your merit will not be lost here."

On the other hand, the ambassador testifies, "Frederick is very artful, and possesses, in the most eminent degree, the talent of conciliating those he has a mind to gain*."

Let me be permitted to add to these dispatches of Mr. Mitchell some observations.

In the first place, the depreciation of the coin was a bad measure, accompanied with injurious consequences; but it is easier to blame than to say by what better means the king might have extricated himself from his terrible embarrassments. The doctrine of public credit and public debts was not at that time so complete as it now is. Who would have lent him anything, either voluntarily or by compulsion? and has not the excessive increase of worthless paper currency as bad consequences as a deterioration of the current coin?

Secondly, The desolation and exhaustion of his kingdom gave the king but too much reason to practise extreme frugality. It is well known how amply he was thereby enabled to assist the several provinces.

Thirdly, Frederick certainly insisted strictly on his royal character and dignity; confiding in it, he, however, disdained petty inquiries against individual declaimers and libellers, and affected not to know that his brother Henry pretended to be dissatisfied. Of the latter Mitchell says:—"The prince is very vain, and hates his brother, of whose greatness he is jealous. At the same time he has talents, but

* The 9th September, 1769. Mitchell Papers, vol. vii.

more cunning than real parts, and French to the bone*."

Fourthly, Persons in office undoubtedly were averse frequently to contradict the king, but, on important occasions, they, as history shows, by no means neglected their duty, and rather ran the risk of losing their posts. Frederick, too, knew very well that the two systems which alternately prevailed in France, namely, the sale of offices, and the appointment of officers at pleasure, were equally bad.

Fifthly, Religious toleration and the liberty of the press were greater in Prussia than in most of the European states, but by no means unlimited, as Lessing has justly observed†. In particular, public censure of measures of the government would not have been tolerated, so much as attacks on opinions relative to the church and to religion. This last circumstance has, however, been alleged, without reason, as a proof of Frederick's entire indifference in matters of religion, and even of his atheism. The manner in which the dogmas of Protestantism had been forced upon him in his youth, and what he had seen of Catholic intolerance, for instance, in France could not satisfy his mind, nor was genuine Christianity manifested in either. Though he never penetrated to this, even in later years, his thoughts and researches continually recurred to these most important questions. He decidedly disapproved, whenever he was in earnest, the shallow views of the *soi-disant* French philosophers. We subjoin some proofs from his works‡.

* The 19th December, 1757. Mitchell Papers, vol. xxviii.

† Works, vol. xxvii. 256.

‡ Œuvres posth., vol. viii. 11; xi. 79, 94.

In a letter to Mitchell he said:

"Un système lié par la sagesse et l'art,
Dont l'ordre, le rapport, le but se manifeste,
Démontre ouvertement un ouvrier celeste.
Le hazard n'est qu'un mot sans rien signifier
A l'orgueil insignifiant, qui sert de bouclier—
Pour soutenir ce monde et pour le protéger
Un Dieu suffit, son bras ne peut se partager.

"It is said in the Gospel, 'Do not unto others as ye would not have them do unto you.' Now this precept is the sum of all morality. It is therefore ridiculous, and an extravagant exaggeration to say, that that religion only makes men rascals. The law ought never to be confounded with the abuse. If I defend the moral doctrines of Christ, I defend that of all philosophers, and I give up to you the dogmas, which are no part of it. When people exclaim against this religion, they ought to point out the time of which they speak, and distinguish the abuses from the institution."

The king decidedly declares in several places against the *système de la nature*, and says, for instance*:—"There is no logic in this book; there are only paralogisms and vicious circles of reasonings, paradoxes, and complete follies, at the head of which must be placed the French republic.

"There is in the works of Diderot a tone of self-sufficiency and of arrogance, which offends our sense of liberty. Modesty becomes everybody."

The king said prophetically†:—"I am persuaded that a fanatic philosopher is the greatest of all possible monsters, and at the same time the most incon-

* Œuvres posth., vol. ix. 150, 207; xi. 81, 180, 181.
† Ibid., vol. xi. 113, 161.

sistent animal on the face of the earth. I despair of my little capacity to establish a government on the footing which your wise legislators (who have never governed) prescribe."

Sixthly, The king very clearly saw how rich a source of public revenue was afforded by the duties of custom and excise. On the other hand, the people were justly discontented with the forms and the substance of the French excise laws. The principles respecting commerce, trade, importation, exportation, &c., which were at that time laid down and observed, were certainly liable to well-founded objections; yet they were not so foolish at that time as they would be in our days. If, therefore, Frederick overvalued and injudiciously imitated the French system, Prussia has now the greater merit of presenting to other states, and especially to France, a better example, by the abolition of the prohibitory and commercial system of Colbert.

Seventhly, With respect to foreign affairs, a closer union with France or England would always have alienated one of the two powers, and inclined Austria to join it. In this situation Frederick was obliged, above all things, to enter into a more intimate connexion with Russia, and to support many of Catherine's plans, which, under other circumstances, he would perhaps have opposed.

CHAPTER XLI.

Catherine's Government—Orloff—The Princess Daschkoff—Panin—Galitzin—Poland—Situation of Austria—King Stanislaus—Plan for Partitioning Poland—Diets—Confederations—Distress and Misery—Approaching Convulsion—Murder of Iwan III.—Mirowitz.

THOUGH my researches and the fruits of them, on the whole, close with the treaties of peace of Paris and Hubertsberg, it may not be superfluous to add some fragments from the years immediately succeeding, especially with respect to Russia and Poland.

Notwithstanding its external splendour, the government of Catherine was neither perfectly tranquil, nor free from censure. "The partiality of the empress for Count Orloff, and the distinction shown him (writes Buckingham), increases daily, and offends many persons*. It would have no bad effect if he were presented with a watch adorned with diamonds, of the value of about five hundred pounds. There is little money here, but much is spent. The interior of the government is in great confusion. The senate publishes resolutions one day which are reversed the next. There is not the same appearance of general satisfaction and cheerfulness which prevailed two months ago, and many even venture to hint their disapprobation of the measures of the court.

"The uncertainty of everything here, and the sudden revolutions of favour, make it very difficult for a foreigner to keep well with this court, and

* Dispatches of 21st February and 26th March, 1763. Russia, vol. lxxiii.

almost impossible for him to give satisfaction to his own *.

"Many soldiers are discontented, and Princess Daschkoff, with her husband, has been sent to Riga. That lady's arrogant behaviour, in a great measure, lost her the empress's esteem. Her spirit was too great either to try to appease her mistress, or to submit to her disgrace; and she has been suspected since of exciting and encouraging those who were disaffected to the present government.

"The persons † concerned in the late disturbances did not avow any design against her majesty. They profess that their only object was the removal of Count Orloff from that distinguished favour which he enjoys. He is considered so much of an upstart in this court, where there is little else, that all but his own family are his enemies; but none more inveterate than those who were engaged with him in the late revolution, and thought their pretensions superior to his. His being sent to fetch the emperor (empress?) from Peterhof, the circumstance from whence he is supposed to have derived his present greatness, was merely accidental.

"In the tumult of Moscow the guards called for the great duke Paul, expressing that they thought his life was in danger, though they had very little reason for such a surmise, as her majesty must be sensible that his life, during his minority, is her greatest security.

"Respecting Iwan the accounts are different; some say that he is a complete idiot; others, that he only wants education, and conceals his capacity.

* Dispatches of 17th and 28th June. Russia, vol. lxiv.

† Dispatch of 25th August. Ibid.

"The empress's life is a mixture of trifling amusements and intense application to business, which, however, from the difficulties which are often industriously put in her way, as well as the variety of schemes at once, has as yet produced nothing. Numerous and extensive are her plans, but greatly inadequate are the means she is able to employ.

"Panin is the chief, if not the sole minister here*; no deliberation is held, no resolution taken without him. Everything here, both foreign and domestic, passes through his hands. He is certainly an uncorrupted man; and though not without many faults, such as pride, inflexibility, and procrastination, he is, in my opinion, by far the properest man in this country for the great employment with which he is honoured.

"Prince Galitzin, the vice-chancellor, is extremely polite and well-bred, but has neither inherited great talents from Nature, nor taken much pains to cultivate those few which she gave him. He has little credit, and is, as a minister, rather of parade than of confidence. The empress herself is a most extraordinary woman, and an example of application and information infinitely superior to any of her subjects.

"Count Orloff is her chief favourite, and seems to have lately taken a resolution worthy of a much wiser man, which is, to meddle very little in public affairs, not at all in foreign, and quietly to enjoy his good fortune and present happiness.

"The empress has very much at heart the affairs of Poland†." On the 9th of October, 1763, Mitchell

* Macartney to Mitchell, June 22, 1766. Mitchell Papers, vol. xxiii.

† The 5th April, 1763. Russia, vol. lxxiii.

mentions a report that Prussia and Russia intended to partition Poland, but does not believe it to be well founded *. The Austrian ambassador was of a different opinion; and Maria Theresa said she wished to live in peace to the end of her days, and trembled at the least spark, for fear it should kindle into a flame †. In the Polish diet in 1762, disputes ran so high, that the parties drew their swords upon each other, especially on the question‡, whether the son of Count Brühl had a right to vote. Catherine supported the opponents of the court till the Czartoriskis prevailed. In January, 1764, Panin said §, that two millions of rubles had already been spent in Poland; and their friends demanded further sums to outbid the French. There had not been the most remote idea of a partition of the republic.

In May, 1764, Maria Theresa demanded || that the king should engage not to send troops to Poland, unless she did so, which she would promise not to do. Frederick answered, that he could not give such a declaration, without previously concerting with the empress of Russia.

England had at that time no longer any influence in Petersburg. At least Macartney writes to Mitchell¶:—"I must not omit to tell you in confidence, that nothing can equal the contempt, in which not only the empress and her ministers, but even all the diplomatic body, hold British politics. For how-

* Mitchell Papers, vol. vi.

† The 9th November, 1763. Stormont's Dispatch. Austria, vol. cxciv.

‡ The 16th October, 1762, and 30th June, 1764. Mitchell Papers, vol. xxiv.

§ The 17th January, 1764. Russia, vol. lxxv.

|| The 29th May, 1764. Mitchell Papers, vol. vii.

¶ The 19th February, 1766. Ibid. vol. xxiii.

ever wise or necessary the frequent changes in the administration may be supposed at home, it is certain that they render us ridiculous and despicable abroad.

"The king of Prussia affects the most firm attachment to the empress's person, and the highest admiration of her virtues and accomplishments*. At the same time he professes the utmost deference to Panin's talents and opinions. Panin (says Macartney†) told me in confidence, that the king of Prussia had frequent fits of the spleen, which, for the time, totally disordered his understanding; that it was very carefully kept secret, or glossed over by another name, but that nothing was more certain. He added, that if Russia did not keep him in awe, he was very capable of committing great follies."

The affairs of Poland continued to be the centre of Russian policy. In February, 1766, Macartney writes‡:—"At the beginning of the last diet, the court of Vienna made some very serious overtures to his Polish majesty (Stanislaus) by the channel of his brother, the prince Poniatowski the general, advising him to shake off his uneasy dependence on Russia, and to embrace the friendship of Austria, offering him an archduchess in marriage, and even proposing a plan of operations for carrying these projects into execution, and for supporting them when executed. This is very certain.

"The court of Warsaw has made the greatest endeavours§ to introduce the plurality (in the diet)

* Macartney to Mitchell, 17th November, 1766. Mitchell Papers, vol. xxiii.

† The 4th September, 1766. Ibid.

‡ The 27th February. Ibid.

§ Dispatch of 26th November, 1766. Ibid.

for the imposing of taxes and augmenting the troops. The Russians and Prussians oppose, and the court yields very unwillingly.

"The result of a twenty-four hours' assembly of the bishops to consider what concessions might be made by them in favour of their persecuted brethren (the dissidents) was, that a resolution passed unanimously in the diet, confirming all the acts that had been made against them. Fears are entertained of the further plans and resolutions of Prussia and Russia, in consequence of this intolerant proceeding.

"There are new rumours about a partition of Poland *. The confederation was prematurely and injudiciously begun † before the Russians withdrew, and gives now new pretexts for their remaining. The chief cause of the universal dissatisfaction that prevails in Poland is owing to the behaviour of the Russian troops, who pillage and plunder wherever they come, and treat the inhabitants with great cruelty and insolence ‡. Repnin executed his orders in an imperious manner. The haughtiness and insolence with which he treats the Polish nobility has created in that nation a universal detestation of the Russians.

"Kaunitz pledges his honour that § the Turks have not been incited from Vienna to a war with Russia."

On the 19th of April, 1769, Colonel Cocceji writes from Warsaw ‖ :—"The king of Poland is in

* Dispatch of 14th February, 1767. Mitchell Papers, vol. vii.
† Dispatch of 26th March, 1768. Ibid. vol. xxiii.
‡ Dispatch of 9th July, 1768. Ibid. vol. vii.
§ Dispatch of 3rd December, 1768. Ibid. vol. xxv.
‖ Mitchell Papers, vol. xlvi.

the greatest embarrassment. The troubles continue, the country is laid waste, blood flows on all sides, the public revenues cease, the administration of justice is suspended; in a word, all possible calamities seem to have come over us, and we cannot see the end of them. What aggravates the evil is, that the empress of Russia pretends that she is acting only for the good of Poland, while her troops pillage the country and massacre the inhabitants.

"Stanislaus is bowed down by grief *. In reply to his representations, the empress answered, it is not the dissidents that are the cause of the troubles, they arise from the hatred of the nation to you. The king's counsellors permit him to take false steps †, in order to ruin him in the opinion of the empress. His uncles betray him, and the unhappy prince is undone, unless a *Deus ex machina* comes to save him. We are on the eve of a great revolution."

It is not my intention at present to continue my communications beyond this crisis, but merely to mention, in conclusion, the fate of Iwan III.

Count Panin told Buckingham, that the prince's understanding was absolutely confused, and his ideas were blended together, without the least rational distinction‡. The ambassador gives the following account of his end on the 20th of July, 1764§: "Lieutenant Mirowitz, who was upon guard in the citadel of Schlüsselburg, where Prince Iwan was confined, having first seduced the soldiers under his command, went to the commandant and insisted

* Dispatch of 10th May, 1769. Mitchell Papers, vol. xlvi.
† Dispatches of 4th and 17th October, 1769. Ibid.
‡ Dispatch of 3rd August, 1764. Russia, vol. lxx7.
§ Ibid.

upon his immediately releasing the prince, which the commandant declining, he immediately caused him to be bound. He next obliged the keeper of the magazine of powder to deliver powder to his soldiers. The noise which these proceedings occasioned, alarmed a captain and lieutenant, one of whom was in the prince's bedchamber, the other in the ante-room. Lieutenant Mírowitz, having afresh encouraged his men, advanced to the prince's apartment, and demanded, with the most violent threats in case of a refusal, that the emperor, as he called him, should be produced. After some resistance, the captain and lieutenant, finding themselves in danger of being overpowered, told Mirowitz, that, if he persisted, it would endanger the prince's life, as their instructions were, in case they found their efforts to guard him ineffectual, immediately to put him to death. Mirowitz, deaf to all remonstrances, forced the door, which put them under the unhappy necessity of executing their orders. The first stab from a Captain-lieutenant Uchtinskoi, waked the unfortunate youth, who was asleep in bed; he made so stout a resistance, as to break one of the swords, and received eight wounds before he expired. The officers then produced the body to Mirowitz and his soldiers, and told them they might now do with their emperor what they thought proper. Mirowitz carried the corpse to the front of the guard, and covered it with the colours, and then, with all his soldiers, prostrated himself before it, and kissed his hand. Then taking off his own gorget, sash, and sword, laid them by the body, and addressing himself to Korsakoff, colonel of the regiment of Smolensko, who was then arrived, and, pointing to the

body, told him, 'There is your emperor, you may do by me as you please. Adverse fortune has blasted my design. I mourn not my own fate, but the misery of my poor fellow-citizens, and the innocent victim of my undertaking.' He then embraced the under-officers, and surrendered himself and his soldiers.

"Printed declarations have been seized, which justify the intended revolution, and it is suspected that Princess Daschkoff had a hand in it."

APPENDIX.

Russia from 1704 to 1740.

Whitworth's Journey to Russia—Breslaw—Wilna—The Russian Army—Miseries of War—Oginsky—Character of the Poles—Parties—Arrival at Moscow—Russia's Military Force—Cossacks—Peter I.—The Fleet—National Costumes—Menzikoff—Charles XII. King Augustus—Poland—Projects of Peace—Old Russian Party—Insurrection in Astrachan—Beards—Regulations respecting Dress—Insurrection of the Bashkirs—Tax upon Eyes—Expedition of Charles XII. to Russia—The Swedish and the Russian Army—Scheremetoff—Menzikoff—Defeat of Löwenhaupt—Rebellion of Mazeppa—Battle of Pultawa—Conduct of Peter—Turkish War—Proceedings against corrupt Officers—Menzikoff—Apraxin—Death of Peter I.—Catherine I.—Peter II.—Princess Natalia—The Fall of Menzikoff—The Princess Elizabeth—Dolgorucky—Count Ostermann—Death of Peter II.—The Empress Anne—Plan of a Change in the Form of Government—Arrival of the Empress—Acceptance and Overthrow of the new Constitution—Golofkin—Ostermann—Jagushinsky—Unlimited Power of the Empress—The Princess Elizabeth—Lestocq—Biron—Magnificence—Poverty—Intrigues—Bribery—Licentiousness—Biron's Influence and Plans—Princess Anne—Anthony Ulrick of Brunswick—Succession to the Throne—Saporogue Cossacks.

There are, in the State-paper Office, five-and-twenty folio volumes of dispatches relative to the history of Russia, from 1704 to 1740. The following extracts from them will be the more interesting as from our want of authentic data, for a knowledge of that empire, even notices of inferior importance become extremely valuable.

In his first dispatch, of the 7th December, 1704, Mr. Whitworth writes from Breslau* :—

* Vol. iii.

"Charles XII. seems to be very little concerned about the Provinces of Livonia, either for the ruin of the country, or the calamities of the people, and told Prince Alexander, (Sobieski?) he was not sorry the czar had made such progress, and cut him out new work for his arms, which otherwise he must have laid down at the end of the Polish war, and retired to an inglorious private life in his own kingdom. War is the only delight and passion of this young monarch, who, on most occasions, follows his own opinion, without having any regard to the advice of his ministers or generals."

From Breslau the ambassador went to Wilna, and, on the 30th of January, 1705, gives the following account of his journey:—

"I was five days in travelling twenty-two German miles through the king of Prussia's country, on the road to Wilna. I cannot sufficiently express the misery I found over all, the desolation of the present war having doubled what the inhabitants suffered, even in time of peace, through the pride and luxury of the lesser nobles, and the abject slavery of the other country people.

"This town has likewise had its share of ruin in the present disturbances; the nobility, who usually resided here, have either followed some party in the war, taken refuge in foreign countries, or retired privately to their estates, to be as much out of the way of the present factions as possible. So the storehouses they had here are entirely gone to decay, and the ordinary citizens make a shift with little wooden cottages of no value, which is their common way of building. The churches, however, the three colleges of Jesuits, and the other convents of friars, are in

pretty good repair, and, by their structure, show that this city has formerly been in a very flourishing condition.

"The Muscovite foot is much commended on all hands, and one of their regiments, which I saw coming to the town two days ago, marched in very good order. The officers were all in German habits, and the common soldiers were well armed with muskets, swords, and bayonets, but dressed, after their own country fashion, in a coarse sort of sackcloth. They easily support all manner of hardships, and are inured to cold and hunger, two necessary qualifications, both for soldiers and travellers, in these countries. So that, were they used to war, and led by good officers (whereof they have great want), they would be a much more dangerous enemy than they are at present reckoned by their neighbours.

"General Oginsky said to me, 'the king Augustus was, and is, betrayed by his own easiness, following the counsels of such Poles as are about him, whereof he declares not three either of the ecclesiastics or seculars, are really his well-wishers, and only make use of his name and authority to carry on their private interest and revenge. Amongst this number he reckons the most part of the Potoskis, and all the family of Lubomirsky, who have again closed with his majesty, not out of inclination to his person, but out of envy to the new elected Stanislaus, and animosity against the Swedes, for not having bestowed the crown to the grand-general, and, therefore, he thinks they ought not to be trusted, since they would be ready to change their principles again, on any new prospect of self-advantage.

"Besides the natural inconstance and uneasiness of the Poles in any condition, they are highly discontented with the imperious carriage and exactions of their new guests*, whom, though they are bid to look upon as friends, they cannot so soon forget to have been their ancient, and almost hereditary, enemies. This was the general language of the lesser nobility, with whom I had occasion to converse, either here or in my road. For being, by their privileges, exempt from any contributions, except what they themselves agree to in their respective diets, they think it a great grievance to give the Muscovites five dollars a month for every house, as the generals have demanded, and actually gather in, under the notion of forage and provisions. The excesses of some private officers and soldiers have added not a little to the general discontents. The reconciliation of the contending parties becomes more difficult, and the final decision by force is, at least, as doubtful as at the first beginning of the quarrel.

"In Tosuhofe (?)†, the first little town of the Czar's dominions, the Starost or burgomaster, a good old peasant, attended by half a dozen of his brethren, with long beards, came to make me a compliment, and presented me a great loaf of coarse brown bread, strowed with salt, bidding me welcome in the Czar's country, and desiring me to take part of such fare as they had."

His entrance into Moscow was, however, of a more dignified nature, as was also his audience with the

* By these guests, as the context shows, are meant the Russians.
† Dispatch from Smolensk of 18th February.

Czar, though nothing deserving particular notice occurred.

"I had the honour," says Whitworth*, "to make a compliment to the Czar's son and heir, Alexius, a tall, handsome prince, about sixteen years old, who speaks pretty good high Dutch, and was present at the entertainment with the first minister Golowkin."

A dispatch of the 25th of March, 1705, gives an account of the Russian army:—

"The foot are generally very well exercised, and the officers tell me, they cannot enough admire what application the common soldiers use till they have learned their duty. The Czar has lately formed sixteen regiments of dragoons, which generally consist of the nobility or landed men, several whereof are obliged to serve as common soldiers at their own expense. They are mounted upon light Tartar horses, and have had several successful rencontres with the Swedish parties in Liefland (Livonia); but it is not thought they will be able to make head, in a set battle, against the Swedish cuirassiers, who have a great advantage by their horses and arms.

"The Cossacks are somewhat in the nature of the emperor's Hussars, and fitter for surprise and skirmishes than any regular action. They are armed, some with short rifle guns, and others with bows and arrows.

"The artillery is, at present, extremely well-served; and General Ogilvy tells me, that he never saw any nation go better to war, with their cannons and mortars, than the Russians did, last year, at

* Dispatch from Moscow, 11th March.

Warsaw. They have new cast one hundred brass pieces of cannon of several calibres, with several mortars, and great quantities of bombs, grenades, powder, and other ammunition, whereof here is plenty enough, several mines of very good iron having been found of late years, and Circassia furnishes more saltpetre than what they have occasion for. They have also begun to make muskets and pistols, having procured some gunsmiths from the elector Palatine's country of Berg, who have already prepared arms for several regiments.

"The maintaining all these forces does not cost the Czar above two-thirds of what other European princes must pay for the same number; since the Russians, who have estates, are obliged to serve at their own charges, or for a very inconsiderable salary. So the only expense is foreign officers, and common foot soldiers.

"When the Czar is with his army, he has not hitherto appeared as general, but only as captain of the bombardiers, and acts according to that post; and his son, the young prince, is a cadet in the Preobrasenki guard, which they probably do with a design of obliging the first nobility to follow their example, and breed themselves up to a knowledge of military affairs, whereas formerly, it seems, they thought they were born generals, as well as lords and princes."

After some observations respecting the formation of the fleet, Whitworth continues:—

"The Czar has gone a great way in establishing his land and sea forces, in which by the strength of his own genius, and almost without any foreign assistance, he has succeeded beyond all expectations,

and will one day make his empire very formidable to all his neighbours, and especially to the Turks.

"His majesty has also made a thorough change in the dress of his country. In all this great city, I see not one of consideration appear otherwise than in German cloaks. One of the hardest tasks was the persuading them to lay aside their long beards*. Most of the chief nobility lost theirs in the Czar's presence, where there was no room to dispute his orders. The common people, however, were not so easily brought to follow the new fashion, till a tax was laid, at the city's gates, on every one who went in or out with a beard, and this was to be paid as often as they passed, by which means they have at last been brought to conform.

"The Czar has, likewise, made several other great reformations, to the unspeakable advantage of his country; and though the good work is not yet brought to perfection, it is to be wondered how far his majesty has gone in so short a time, and without any disturbance, which must only be attributed to the happy genius of this prince, who is very curious and diligent, and, notwithstanding the disadvantage of his education, has acquired almost an universal knowledge by his own labour and observation†.

"The Czar's favourite, Mentschikof, possesses great practical skill and an affinity of genius to his master ‡, but his origin and education is mean. He can neither read nor write, is very obstinate, and given up to vicious inclinations."

Whitworth's dispatches contain much information

* See the subsequent dispatch of 3rd March, 1706.

† The Czar understood high Dutch very well. Dispatch of 2nd May, 1706. ‡ Dispatch of 13th June.

respecting the barbarities of the northern war, the desire for war or peace, as also of the hopes and fears of the different parties, from which, by way of specimen, I select the following* :—

"Forty-five Russians were taken prisoners by the Swedes. They had their two former fingers of their right hands cut off, in cold blood, some months after, and were then dismissed, with that ignominious mark in their own country. The Czar is extremely moved at this proceeding, and declared publicly, that though the Swedes endeavoured, by false reports, to represent him and his people as barbarians and unchristian, yet he appealed to all the world, and particularly to some thousands of Swedish prisoners, now in his dominions, whether ever he had treated any of them with such indignity? Adding that, though he was sorry for these poor soldiers, yet he should find a great advantage by this action, for he intended to place one of them in every regiment, who might be a living remonstrance to their companions, what usage they were to expect from their merciless enemies, in case they suffered themselves to be taken or overcome."

On the 21st November, 1705, Whitworth writes :—

"The Czar is more in earnest to treat with Sweden than ever, out of different reasons, at least, whether the Swedes would not listen to the Christian proposals of releasing the poor people, who suffer under so long a captivity, either by a general exchange, or on their word given not to serve during the present war."

"The king of Poland is equally weary of the

* Dispatch of 2nd May, 1705.

Czar's direction, the war with Sweden *, and the crown of Poland, which he only maintains out of a pure point of honour and reputation, or else, as he told me himself, he would rather live a private citizen in Leipzig than reign over such a people. He and the Czar have endeavoured to shift for themselves, by separate agreements; but the king of Sweden's averseness to peace had hitherto disappointed their laudable intentions, and kept them just and true to their alliance; however, they are not strangers to one another's designs and inclinations, and from thence I believe what has been may be again, whenever they shall find it for their advantage, or whenever a neuter power shall have an interest to engage any of them to this step.

"There is a fourth party concerned, which is the Poles†. Whoever has money to bribe, or force to compel, shall be acknowledged and obeyed, and the beaten party will be certainly rebels and enemies. For this unsettled nation like the sea, though it foams and roars,—only moves as it is agitated by some superior power.

"Thus I cannot learn that there are any terms which may reciprocally content the Czar and the Swede, in the posture their affairs now are. The one is resolved to keep Petersburgh, and, before the last extremity, the other will scarce allow him that or any other port on the Baltic, whither the greatest part of the trade and revenues in Livonia would soon be drawn away; nor can I pretend to judge how far it may be the interest of England and Holland

* Dispatch of 3rd February, 1706.

† Independent of Peter, Charles XII. and Augustus.

to let the Czar into the affairs and trade of Europe by this door. The opinion that their neighbours will be, one day, bound to recover for them this province, partly caused the fatal neglect of that province; and the Czar himself seems apprehensive of this maxim.

"The extent of the Prussian coasts on the Baltic obliges the king of Prussia to take care that no formidable power encroaches on that sea."

Respecting the old Russian party and the rebellion in Astrachan, the ambassador gives highly interesting particulars. The latter he already mentions in a dispatch of the 7th of October, 1705, and places in connexion with financial measures.

"The Czar," he says, "has thought fit to take into his own hands the fishery and commerce of salt on the Wolga, which was formerly the chief employment and subsistence of that country."

A dispatch of the 3rd of March, 1706, is more circumstantial:—"Here is a set of people spread all over Moscow, who pretend to a greater degree of sanctity than the rest of their fellow subjects. They are strangely tenacious of their old ignorance and ceremonies; some whereof are represented to be so impious that I can scarce believe any society of men was ever guilty of such behaviour under the notion of religion: however they were, about thirty years ago, condemned by the patriarch Nicholas, and prohibited under the severest penalties. Notwithstanding which censure, great part of the middling sort of people, who are the zealous patrons of long beards and garments, are still thought to be privately of their persuasion.

"You will have heard with how much difficulty

the whole nation submitted to the razor. They were prepossessed both by custom and religion. Their forefathers lived unshaved, their priests, saints, and martyrs, were venerable for their beards; them they were bid to imitate; and the ignorant thought part of the devotion lay in the beard, as Samson's strength did in his hair. Nay, even the ladies themselves joined in the fashion, and could at first be scarce brought to suffer the reformation in their husbands. But the court and the chief persons having complied with the Czar's desires, the most prudent and moderate way of reducing the commonalty, was thought to be the laying a tax on all beards, as often as they passed the gates of any principal town; and leave was also given to take out protection for a yearly sum of money, which a great many have done; and on producing their ticket stamped with a long beard, are let pass without any further inquisition.

"Some time after another edict was published, enjoining the women to wear petticoats under the same penalties; whereas their former habit was only a loose gown, buttoned down before, and reaching to their heels.

"I have been the more particular in this account, because, however trifling these points may seem, they gave no small occasion to the present disturbances. For the governor of Astrachan being a cruel imprudent man, would not be content with the fine imposed by the Czar on the disobedient, but was resolved to make a thorough reformation. For which, and after the time of grace was expired, he placed his officers at all the church doors, who cut off the women's loose garments, from their middles, and pulled out the beards of several persons by the roots,

which violence put the whole town (who were generally of the sort above mentioned) in great anger; and one of the most zealous, an under-receiver of the customs, being chosen for their captain, they assaulted the governor in the night, and cut him to pieces, together with three hundred families of foreigners, part merchants and part Swedish prisoners. In one of the houses they by chance found a peruke block, formally carved with nose, mouth, and eyes, which was immediately seized and carried in triumph through the town, the rabble crying after it:—'Behold the god of the strangers, which we shall at last be forced to worship if we do not free ourselves from their customs and slavery.' The ringleaders, without doubt, knew the barber well enough; but it served a turn, and passed current with the mob, who were used every day to see as rough hewn images adored by their neighbouring heathens of Tartary and Siberia."

The next interesting dispatches are of the year 1708. On the 21st of March the ambassador writes*:—"I always looked upon the Czar's offer of entering into the grand alliance to be an indigested proposal, disadvantageous and impracticable in the present juncture, nor well understood by their court itself, who, like drowning men, do not look well about, but greedily catch at anything that may seem for their assistance.

"The troops of Menzikoff, at their retreat from Wilna, were found plundering the villages, burning their magazines, and running away with the precipitation of a routed army from a little party of Swedes and Wallachians.

* Vol. iv.

"The 26th September was the birth-day of Prince Alexius, who had acted for some time as governor of Moscow, and assisted at the council of the lords and fortifications of the town with great application.

"The Baskirsky Tartars are in open rebellion. Their nation is very rich and numerous, and has many considerable villages towards the river Usta, being much more civilized than the Calmucks, or other hordes of great Tartary. They lived quietly while Prince Gallitzin was governor of Casan; but the Prebolshiks being set over them, exasperated the whole country by their oppressions, the most material of which had been the forcible baptizing of near 12,000 of them into the Muscovite religion; and the most insolent was the imposing of a tax on all *black eyes*, the beauty of the country, and on other colours in proportion; nor could this poor people obtain the least justice before they took up arms. But now their tormentors are removed, after a great struggle, and Prince Gallitzin is restored to his employment, with orders to go and examine their grievances and give them satisfaction."

Meantime the danger increased from the side of Sweden; and on the 23rd of May, 1708, the ambassador writes:—"A Russian officer, coming from Menzikoff's army, says, that the resolution is taken to dispute the passage of the Beresina, which at present separates the Swedish and the Muscovite armies, and though small, is very difficult.

"The account he gives of the Swedes is, that the bodies of the men are strong, their exercise good, their regiments complete and desirous to engage; but the foot have ill fire-arms, the dragoons ill horses, and the army not three able generals, so that

a vigorous onset and a bad issue of a battle may be expected, should it once come to that."

On the 28th of September, 1708, he continues:—"As the Czar was abandoned by King Augustus, his case was looked on to be almost desperate; till the continual aversion of his enemy to any negotiation, and the hard terms imposed on his late ally, made him see what he was to expect, and that the only choice left was a resolute defence or entire ruin. He therefore fortified the places most exposed on his frontiers, recruited his army, raised a great number of new levies, procured many foreign officers; and during the long delays in Saxony, renewed his treaties with the confederate Poles. It was all along expected the king of Sweden, at his return, would have first endeavoured to unite this schism by a general diet of pacification, or to gain over M. Seniaufski (?), and the other chief families, by some little compliance with their interests, which would have established the work of his hands, and might have insensibly led the Poles into the present war, whose troops were most proper to have secured his rear, and convoys of provisions from the sudden incursions of the Cossacks and Tartars, the want whereof is now his greatest distress. But these gentle means have been despised, nor any proper force yet employed towards the discontented party to effect their submission.

"If what the Russians report from the several deserters and prisoners concerning the dearth in his camp is half true, it is now found to be the greatest obstacle to his designs. He has, indeed, always affected a total neglect of magazines and artillery, and has hitherto gone on with success, without these

expensive and unwieldy trains of war, as well as his great ancestor, Charles Gustavus, whose life and deeds I have formerly heard are his only study and imitation. But this was in Poland—a plentiful country and licentious government, where every man is free to choose his own way of ruin; nor has any one the necessary power to stop the general flame by blowing up his neighbour's house. But the maxims here are quite otherwise; the rule is absolute, and no private interest suffered to come in competition with the good of the whole, or pleasure of the prince. Besides, the land is not so well tilled, the villages few, their wooden houses of little value, and the furniture almost nothing; so that wherever an enemy approaches, the people are warned away with what they can save, and the Cossacks set fire to the rest, as they have several times already done in sight of the Swedish army, who find all desolate before them, and, as they advance, will run further into want and cold.

"It is also observed they make their attack in the most difficult, though nearest, way to Moscow, where the towns are most scattered, and the rivers, marshes, and woods least practicable. Whereas, had they gone down to the Ukraine, they would have found a noble campaign, plenty of forage, and many rich towns of the Cossacks, a free people, not so well affected to the present government as to suffer a total desolation for its sake, the old general Mazeppa having work enough to keep them steady in their duty as it is. Or had the king made his attempt on the side of Livonia, his rear had been secured, and provisions easily furnished by his own country and by shipping.

"The two armies are now within sight, and though the autumn be very fine, in five or six weeks it must give way to a five months cold and snow, nor can the army keep the field much longer. But where the Swedes can with safety take their winter-quarters is not easy to be foreseen, without a general battle, which, though hard to come at, seems to be their best resource. For should they be obliged to repass the Dnieper into Lithuania, and stay there till next spring, the war may endure as long as that in Poland did, and the conditions of peace be at least as uncertain and hazardous: were the crown army brought to their side it would be no despicable acquisition.

"As to the Czar, he has the advantage of a numerous army, that will amount next spring to near 80,000 men, though now they are extremely lessened by desertion, skirmishes, sickness, and want of care. The army is composed of lusty well-made fellows, their exercise good, their air quite altered since their campaigns in Poland, and many of their regiments will doubtless fight if well led on. But their arms are bad, their horses worse; nor if once broken are they used to rally again in order, but charge as they can get together; and though encouraged by their late success, they will make a bold and vigorous attack, yet they are not proper to sustain a continual shock, and, if once heartily beaten, will scarce be brought to stand again. For it is the temper of the country, from the highest to the lowest, to be very confident on the least success, and to sink as low on any misfortune.

"The Czar's greatest unhappiness is the want of good generals. The field-marshal Scheremetef is a gentleman of unquestionable personal valour, very

fortunate in his expeditions against the Tartars, and extremely beloved by his country and the common soldiers; but having never been employed against a regular enemy before, wants the necessary experience, which is said to be the only cause that the battle was lost in Courland.

"Prince Menzikof, general of the horse, is the second in rank, but first in authority, since his ascendant is so great, and as his orders in civil and military affairs are equally absolute, and the Czar generally used to follow his determinations, though sometimes against his own opinion, but his interest is said to decline. His whole character is very disadvantageous, to say no worse. And as for the war, he has neither experience to know, capacity to learn, nor courage to execute, as was plainly seen by the late disorderly retreat from the Vistula to the Dnieper, which gave little reason to think the Russians would now so well dispute their ground.

"As for recruits the Czar cannot want them, the lives and fortunes of all his subjects being at his disposal; nor will the money fail as long as his enemies can be kept out of his frontiers, and unnecessary expense be retrenched, so that he has no reason to hazard all at a push, and finds more conveniency in starving his enemies, and weakening them by frequent parties. And though most of his lords, and, indeed, the generality of his subjects, are discontented, yet he has brought the Muscovites too low to fear any revolt as long as his army is on foot, and nothing but the circumstances of time can make the wild tumults of the Cossacks or Tartars considerable.

"The design of the Swedes is (as is said) to press

on Smolensko, in hopes of finding plenty of provisions thereabouts; but that they had been extremely surprised and disappointed to find the Russians burn up their own country, which they could not have believed."

The next important events that succeeded were the victory of the Russians over General Löwenhaupt, and the revolt of General Mazeppa to the king of Sweden, with all his family and riches. "Mazeppa," says Whitworth, on the 21st of November, 1708, "is near seventy years old, was extremely considered and relied on by the Czar, has no child but a nephew, and has heaped up vast sums of money in that wealthy province, where he governed so long with little less authority than a sovereign prince, so that I cannot learn what disgust or expectation may have drawn him into new councils and actions, in such an advanced and decrepit age."

On the 28th November the ambassador continues: "Some days before Mazeppa went over, he gave himself out to be very sick and to despair of his recovery, at which the court was very much concerned, and at his instance took measures to elect a new general in his presence, for which purpose Count Golofdin only expected the Czar's orders to repair thither. In the meantime, Prince Mentschikof, marching on that side with a body of horse, resolved to visit and dine with the general, taking only with him a few gentlemen, and some of his guards. But when Mentschikof arrived at Bathurin, Mazeppa's castle, he found it closed and the hetman fled. The treachery was manifest, and the castle taken by storm."

Events of this kind did not, however, seem to in-

terrupt the uniform course of Russian life. At least, on the 23d January, 1709*, the ambassador writes: "At a great entertainment the Czar beat his favourite very severely, but the next day went to him and made friends."

Meantime the war was carried on in the vicinity of Pultawa. On the 19th June, 1709, Whitworth writes:—"Pultawa, a town on a little hill near the river Worskla, and one of the most considerable in all the Ukraine for the number of the inhabitants, the extent of the ground, and the advantage of the situation, which covers the Saporowich Cossacks, and opens a communication with those of the Don and the Tartars. It was only fortified with a castle-wall and palisades against the sudden incursions of the Tartars; but the Muscovites, suspecting the Swedes, designed to settle themselves thereabout last winter; Major-general Wolchonsky was sent with a considerable garrison, and orders to put the place in a condition of defence, as has been done by flinging up some outworks, though too inconsiderable to resist an army which was tolerably well provided with artillery and ammunition. But the want of powder in the Swedish camp is said to be so great, that they cannot spare enough to shoot a breach, and therefore are obliged to make use of other methods in this attack.

"They had once brought a mine under the very wall, and laid in ten barrels of powder; but being discovered by the besieged, the powder was taken out just before it should have sprung, and those who were beginning the storm were beaten off with loss. A reinforcement of 1200 men, each carrying a pound

* Vol. v.

of powder and half a pound of lead, got some time after into the town without any loss, under Brigadier Golowin (Mentschikof's brother-in-law) and Colonel Otho, a Dane. But in the first sally they made, the brigadier had the misfortune to be taken prisoner, and the colonel was killed.

"The Russian army is now all drawn together on the other side of the Worskla, and when the Czar comes from Azoff, it is thought they may hazard a battle, for which some of the generals give their advice; but such reports have often been without any consequence. In the meantime the Muscovites are endeavouring to gain a line of communication with the place, and the Swedes are drawing up another to hinder them.

"The Swedes," continues the ambassador, on the 26th June, "made little advance, and of late scarce any fire from their batteries, their chief application being to hinder the line of communication which the Muscovites have hitherto attempted in vain. Provisions are said to be scarce in their camp, the water they had bad, and near 4000 of their horses have been at several times driven from the pasture by the Cossacks and other small parties; but their greatest want is of powder, and the deserters report, their common discourse was of repassing the Dnieper. The Czar arrived on the 3d June in his army, which he found numerous and in a very good condition, and his majesty has written hither himself that he is resolved to give the Swedes battle some time this month, for which the necessary preparations are making with great diligence."

This led to the battle of Pultawa, respecting which Whitworth states the following from the ac-

count of eye-witnesses: "The Czar had passed the river Worskla, and posted his army very near the enemy five days before, in which time no considerable action happened, the Swedes still retiring into their camp on the approach of the Muscovite parties, in hopes of rendering them secure and unprovided against a surprise. On the 26th, in the evening, Lieutenant-general Rönne had the advanced guard of the army, and riding himself with one of his party, near the Swedish outwork in the night, he heard a continual noise in their camp, from whence, apprehending some design, he immediately ordered the horse to mount and possess themselves of a pass between the two armies, but was scarce got in order before the Swedish horses came up and attacked him. He sustained their charge for about an hour, till he had notice that the foot was drawn up and all things in readiness, when he retired with his men to both wings of the army. On this retreat the Swedes advanced, in hopes of putting them into confusion, but were received so warmly by seventy weighty pieces of cannon, that they fell themselves into disorder, and the foot coming up to their succour, were attacked by the Muscovite infantry sword in hand after the first discharge, and being likewise obliged to retire, were met by General Bauer, who had wheeled about with a strong detachment to fall on their rear, on which the greatest part flung down their arms, and the rest was only a pursuit.

"The first officer of note who was taken was Major-general Schlippenbach by the Czar himself, and soon after Field-marshal Rönnschildt was brought by Field-marshal Scheremeteff. His czarish majesty was very active during the whole combat; he re-

ceived a shot through his hat, and rode down four horses. All was over by eight o'clock in the morning, and then the Czar invited the Swedish generals to dinner. They were very civilly treated, and, amongst other questions, the Czar asking General Rönnschildt how strong their army was the day of battle, he said neither he nor any of the army could tell, but the king himself, to whom alone the lists were brought, and not communicated to any person whatsoever, but that he guessed they might be about 30,000 men, 19,000 regular troops, and the rest Cossacks. Being then asked how they could venture themselves so far into so large a country with so small a number of men? and answering, that what was done was not always by their advice, who, as true servants, are obliged to follow their master's orders without dispute, the Czar took his own sword from his own side, and presenting it to the general, told him, 'That, since he was so true a servant, he should wear that as a remembrance.'

"The king of Sweden had been wounded in the leg some days before in a skirmish with General Rönne, and in the battle was carried before the troops in a calesh, which being scattered to pieces by a cannon-ball, and his bed found upon the ground bloody, it was apprehended that he had been killed.

"The Swedes had bread and flesh enough in their camp, but no brandy nor beer, and so little powder, that it was ordered by the parole they should not talk of it."

Löwenhaupt's unexpected capitulation excited even more astonishment than the defeat of the Swedes at Pultawa. "The reason given for this capitulation," says Whitworth, on the 4th September, "is that,

except three old Swedish regiments, all the other soldiers refused to fight, being quite dispirited by their former hardships, and careless alike of themselves and their reputation."

On the 19th September Whitworth repeats that, "Löwenhaupt's friends allege that most of the regiments refused to fight, but the officers who have taken service under the Czar say, to their own justification, that they and the soldiers were ready to have done their duty, and knew nothing of their capitulation till they were ordered to lay down their arms; and others observed, that no proper disposition was made, no trench cast up, the baggage and artillery not ranged, nor anything done that had the prospect of a battle, though they had time enough before ever the detachment of Prince Mentschikof came near them."

Though the Czar behaved with the greatest kindness to his Swedish prisoners, there was yet ground enough for complaint. In a dispatch of the 6th February, 1710, Whitworth writes: "The Swedish generals having complained to the Czar that several of their common soldiers were suffered to die for hunger, and even no care taken of burying their dead bodies, the Czar, being heavily incensed, ordered Prince Gagarin, the commandant of Moscow and one of the chief ministers of this empire, to be put in arrest in his own house, from whence he was hardly released yesterday at the entreaties of the empress-dowager and the princesses. The vice-commandant, Prince Bogdan Gagarin, was also laid in a common prison, with a silver chain about his neck and a great block."

Though such harsh measures inspired fear, they,

on the other hand, doubtless excited a desire of revenge. They certainly did not prevent all acts of injustice; at least the ambassador, on the 9th of October, 1710, writes: "Under the pretext of attacking Swedes, they seized at Moscow all sorts of foreigners, and kept and frighted them till they got some money from them."

Respecting the war of Peter against the Turks in 1711, we find the following remarkable passage in a dispatch of the 3d September: "The peace with the Turks, opposed by the Tartar khan, they say that the vizier was gained with 300,000 rubles.

"The Russian cavalry had for eight days neither grass nor hay, but lived only from tree-leaves and roots; so wearied out, that they could scarce walk; that there was want of all sorts of provisions, and no possibility by any means to escape; that the Czar, seeing himself in so great a danger, wept, and on horseback with his new empress, Catherine, were ready to run the hazard of making their escape with a few people rather than to deliver their persons into their enemy's hands, had not the grand vizier accepted the peace."

From 1711 to 1719, and from 1719 to 1728, we do not meet with any, or at least with no available, dispatches, and among those of the ambassador Jefferies of 1719, only one, dated the 9th January, deserves notice in this place*. He says: "Besides the disaffected of this country, who have gone so far in their perfidy as to frame at divers times conspiracies against his czarish majesty and the present government, there are others, even of the first rank, who, under the pretext of an inviolable fidelity, have

* Vol. xi.

not been less dangerous to the state, by endeavouring to enrich themselves at the expense of their master, in the government and other directions committed to their charge. The Czar being well informed of their bad conduct, had thought fit to dissemble for awhile till the troubles of the late conspiracy should be at an end; but soon after the execution which happened here, his majesty called his senate together, and told them it was time to look into the conduct of those who had had the chief management of the affairs, and for this purpose he established a tribunal, composed of some general officers and others, of which General Weide is the president. The inquisition began with Prince Mentchikof, who was accused first of having sought his own profit and interest in his own government of Ingria, preferable to that of the Czar, for having favoured and protected the Salofiofs (three brothers) that drove a commerce in goods prohibited, and for having held secret correspondence with a Swedish minister. The prince was put under arrest by order of the Czar, but some days afterwards was restored to his liberty, and he has since given him his promise that he will forget what is past. It is said that this prince has offered, of his own accord, to pay 200,000 rubles to the Czar, or a *dédommagement*, for the losses his majesty has sustained by his fraudulent commerce.

"The great admiral Apraxin was found guilty of mismanagement in the affairs of the fleet. He was confined the same day and divested of the order of St. Andrew, but he has had the same good fortune as Prince Mentchikof, of being soon restored to the

Czar's good favours by means of a considerable sum of money, which he is to pay him. In the same manner others arrested were taxed—the Salofiofs to 700,000 rubles."

Peter the Great died on the 8th February, 1725; his consort, Catherine I., 17th May, 1727. She was succeeded by Peter II., son of the unfortunate Alexius and grandson of Peter I. He was born on the 12th October, 1715; his elder sister, Natalia, on the 12th July, 1714.

It is not till the year 1728 that the dispatches of the ambassador Rondeau begin. He writes on the 9th August:—"Count Luthol, who is a very handsome gentleman, was a great favourite of the late Czarina during that princess's reign. Anna Crama, a very intriguing lady, was also a great favourite of the late Czarina, and had been privy to all that princess's parties of pleasure, in which Count Luthol was one of the principal actors.

"Mentchikof placed Luthol and Crama with Princess Natalia; soon after they had some misunderstanding with Prince Mentchikof, and having gained the affection of their new mistress, they joined with her and Princess Elizabeth, Apraxin, Golofkin, Ostermann, and others, to ruin Mentchikof, in which they succeeded.

"At present, Luthol and Crama are the only favourites of Princess Natalia, and govern her as they think fit. This princess, at the beginning of her brother's reign, had a great deal to say at court, being the greatest favourite the Czar had; but taking upon herself a little too much, and trying to persuade her brother to leave that irregular life he

leads, her kind admonitions became troublesome to the young prince, and of course she lost a great deal of the credit she had over him.

"Princess Elizabeth is now in high favour. She is very beautiful, and seems to love all that can please the Czar, as dancing, hunting, which last is his reigning passion: for some others I think not so proper to be mentioned. This princess, as yet, does not seem to meddle with any state affairs, being entirely given up to pleasure, and following the young prince wherever he goes.

"His czarish majesty's great favourite at present is young Prince Dolgorucky, aged about twenty. They are inseparable both day and night, and he is one in all his parties of debauch, which are very frequent.

"The great projects of his grandfather will soon dwindle to nothing."

Dispatch of 11th September, 1728:—"The Czar is very inconsistent in his resolutions, for one day he will say one thing, and the other quite the contrary, which gives his ministers a great deal of uneasiness. Baron Ostermann has the sole management of all affairs, and he has found the way to make himself so serviceable, that as yet they cannot do without him. When he is not pleased, he pretends to be sick, that he should be excused going to council; and when the two Dolgoruckys, Apraxin, Golofkin, and Gallitzin, meet in council, and Ostermann is not there, they are all at a stand. They sit a little, drink a dram, and then are obliged to go and court the baron, to get him in a good humour. By these means he brings them to consent to all he desires, but it is believed this way will not always do.

"Dolgorucky's counsels appear so absurd and his excesses so unworthy, that, on the urgent representations of Natalia and Ostermann, he is now disgraced*; but a short time afterwards, on the 29th November, 1728, the former died, and the influence of the recalled favourite was even greater than before. Contrary to the wishes of Ostermann and many other persons, the betrothment of the Czar with the sister of Dolgorucky has been declared. She is about eighteen, very handsome, and endowed with a great many fine qualities." (Dispatch of 20th November, 1729.)

All these plans, however, were frustrated by the death of Peter II. on the 19th January, 1730. "The grand council," writes Rondeau on the same day†, "immediately and unanimously declared Anna, the daughter of Iwan Alexiewitch, the duchess-dowager of Courland, as his successor."

The dispatches of Rondeau give interesting particulars respecting this remarkable plan of changing the monarchical form of government, and thus to procure to the higher nobility a more decided influence. "I hear that the most considerable of the Russian nobility are at work to alter the form of this government, and it is assured articles are drawn up to limit the power of the empress, to which she must sign, or they will choose another."

On the 2d February, 1730, he writes:—"The following, it is said, are the conditions proposed:—

"1. That the empress is to have a fixed sum allowed for her household, and she is to command no part of the army but the guard that will be actually on duty in her palace.

* Dispatch of 23d November, 1728. † Vol. xiii.

"2. There is to be a high council, composed of twelve of the most considerable of the nobility, who are to manage all the affairs of great consequence, as peace, war, and making alliances. A treasurer of the crown is to be named, who is to give account to the high council how he disposes of the government money.

"3. There is to be a senate of thirty-six persons, who are to examine the affairs before they are brought to the high council.

"4. There is to be an assembly of 200 of the little nobility to maintain their rights, in case those of the high council should encroach upon them.

"5. There is to be an assembly of gentlemen and merchants, who are to take care that the people are not oppressed.

"This, in general, is the scheme they are working upon; as yet they are not very well agreed among themselves how to settle it; but they are gone too far to go back, which obliges most people to think they certainly will make some considerable alterations."

On the 16th February, 1730, Rondeau writes:—"The nobility cannot agree what form to give the alterations. I have seen several plans which have been laid before the high council, but they seemed to be very ill digested, and none of them have been generally approved, though they were signed by several considerable families. As these gentlemen have always been used to obey blindly an absolute monarch, they have no true notions of a limited government. The great nobility would fain get the power in their own hands, and the little nobility and gentry are very jealous they should, and would

rather have one master than several, without some way be found out, to make them easy, and secure them from being tyrannized by the great families.

"At this time we hear daily different reports, some asserting there will be a considerable alteration, and others, with as much certainty, there will be none.

"Soon after her majesty arrived at Fescasweatzk, which is a little village about six miles from Moscow, she declared herself colonel of the regiment of Trebrozensky guards, and captain of the chevalier guards, and gave every one of the officers and soldiers a glass of wine or brandy with her own hand, which has gained their hearts.

"The high council and the senate went in a body to Fescasweatzk, the grand chancellor Count Golofkin presented her the order of St. Andrew, and Gallitzin said, in the name of the high council and senate, that they humbly thanked her majesty for being so gracious to accept of the crown, and signing the articles which were sent her to Mitau. She answered, that she thanked them for having elected her, that she had signed these articles to please them, and that she was resolved to keep them as long as she lived, and desired they would take care that true justice should be administered to everybody; that she would do her utmost to give them the best advice she was able, and that she hoped they would, on their part, do everything that might be for the benefit of their country.

"The conditions were to reign by the advice of the high council, not to marry without its sanction, not to declare war, conclude peace, levy taxes, fill up high offices, not to sanction the execution or con-

fiscation of nobles without full proof, or alienate crown lands without its consent."

"Yesterday," writes Rondeau, on the 26th February, "the high council met, and resolved to present an address to the empress, to desire she would approve the plan which Prince (blank in MS.) had drawn up. Then they waited on her majesty, and the plan was read, which she approved and signed, after which they returned to the high council, where it was proposed that, in consideration of her majesty's goodness, something should be done for her. Knäs Yousopoff answered, 'He was of opinion that they should offer her the absolute sovereignty, as her predecessors had had before;' to which everybody consented; and immediately they returned to her majesty and made her the offer, which she accepted without any hesitation, so that there is an end to the grand affair, and the empress is at present as despotic as was the late Czar."

An anonymous letter which accompanies the ambassador's dispatches, gives a more circumstantial account:—"Baron Ostermann, hearing of this plan, thought that changes would lessen his power considerably, and he could but be a subordinate to the great council, pretended to be out of order, and laid up with the gout, in order to avoid the signing of it; but the Dolgoruckys and Gallitzins came to his house and obliged him to sign it against his inclination.

"While the plan was in agitation, General Jagoushinsky, who was neglected, and purposely excluded from the secret, out of rage, according to his custom, dispatched one of his servants expressly to the duchess of Courland, advising her not to sign the

conditions proposed by the high council, as highly prejudicial to her interests, and that she might, without the least doubt, have the crown upon her own terms. The great council having some intimation of his dispatches, ordered the messenger to be stopped on the road, and finding the forementioned contents in the letter, put the general under a strict guard in irons, depriving him at the same time of his blue ribbon, in order to form his process.

"The nation rejoiced at the Czarina's arrival, and all things passed very quietly; but an immediate change followed to the great surprise of all those that have the true notion of liberty. The Princes Trubetzky, Czerkasky, and Soltikoff, being apprehensive of the great power that the Dolgorukys and Gallitzins might have in the great council, and, perhaps, prescribe laws to the rest of the nobility, formed secretly a strong party among the lower sort of nobility (which it is thought was done by Ostermann's and the great chancellor Golowkin's secret contrivance), and before the Dolgorukys had a perfect intimation of it.

"One morning the guards, being by order of Lieutenant-general Soltikoff doubled, Trubetzky and Czerkasky, at the head of three hundred noblemen, came up to the Kreml to present a memorial to the Czarina, in the name of the Russian nobility, beseeching her imperial majesty to assume the former sovereignty which her predecessors had enjoyed by all the rights in the world, and to abolish the new form of government, as tending to the greatest prejudice of her interest and the whole empire. The great chancellor Golowkin, who was the keeper, according to his office, of the instrument signed by the Czarina

at Mitau, did not fail to be present in the morning at court before the deputation came, and having the said instrument in his pocket, upon her majesty's accepting the sovereignty, tore it before the eyes of the great council in pieces, and so that precious liberty which we had but a glimmering, and flattered ourselves to enjoy it for some time in tranquillity, was eclipsed all on a sudden. All this seemed to us like a dream.

"Jagoushinsky, whom everybody expected to be used in an infamous manner, was immediately sent for, and had his post, sword, and the order restored to him by her majesty's own hands, as an assertor of her rights, and at present has a great share in her favour, flattering himself to be made in a little time a field-marshal.

"The Gallitzins and Dolgoruckys are looked upon as disaffected to the imperial prerogative, though they were the very instruments of setting the crown on her majesty's head.

"Ostermann still continues politically to keep his bed; and upon Jagoushinsky's persuasion the Czarina went the other day to make him a visit in person, to take his advice upon the present juncture, and since we hear that a senate is to be settled upon the same footing as was in the time of Peter I.

"The noblemen who agreed in proposing the limitations keep themselves very quiet; yet they do not omit to cabal privately together in favour of Princess Elizabeth, which princess has a considerable number of officers well-affected to her, out of a love to the memory of the late Czar, Peter I. The chief design of this cabal is to oblige the present Czarina to settle the succession upon Princess Eli-

zabeth in her lifetime; whereas the Czarina is inclined to settle it on her niece, the duchess of Mecklenburgh's daughter."

The writer of this letter gives also the following characteristic sketches of some of the Russian nobles: —"*Golowkin*, the great chancellor, is son of a poor country gentleman, who was chief huntsman of prince Chawansky in the reign of Czar Alexius Michaelowitz. This gentleman was of the household of prince Alexis Gallitzin, then guardian or governor of the young Czar Peter, during the administration of his sister, Princess Sophia; and in consideration of the exact intelligence he brought from time to time of Sophia's proceedings, was by the favour of that prince (?) made groom of the bedchamber to the Czar; and afterwards, for his faithful adherence during the rebellion and conspiracy of the princess, advanced to be lord of the bedchamber.

"His assiduity about the Czar's person by degrees gained him the favour and confidence of that prince, who after some time declared him great chamberlain; and soon after the death of Count Gollowik, great chancellor, though he knew him to be a simple illiterate man, and without any better qualifications for that high post than a most obsequious and servile compliance. His officious and affable deportment (the best quality he has), with a zeal and appearance of devotion, has got him considerable credit among the old Russian bigots, and especially with the clergy. He is covetous to the highest degree, and studies all imaginable ways of raising an immense fortune, in which he has succeeded so well that he is at present the richest nobleman in all Russia.

"*Baron Ostermann.*—Born at Essen, a town in Westphalia, is the son of a poor curate in that country, who, in 1703, was taken into the service of vice-admiral Cruys in Holland, as his valet de chambre, and upon his application to learn the Russian language, made his secretary, and soon after by him recommended to Baron Schaphiroff, then secretary of state, to be employed in the office of foreign affairs. By whose favour he was made interpreter, translator, under-secretary, and at length counsellor of the chancery for foreign affairs. He has a competent knowledge of the modern languages, but a very slender acquaintance with the Latin. His understanding and ability are certainly nowise contemptible, but he is full of finesse and artifice, false and treacherous, in his deportment submissive and insinuating, with low cringings and bowings, which is reckoned the best policy amongst the Russians, and wherein he outdoes all the natives. He is a bon-vivant and epicure, and has sometimes something of generosity, but little of gratitude. For when the contest arose at court between Prince Mentchikoff with the great chancellor Golowkin on one side, and Baron Schaphiroff on the other, he not only abandoned his patron and benefactor, but joined with the other against him. So Schaphiroff being overborne, was banished to Archangel; and as there remained nobody that understood foreign languages well, Ostermann some time afterwards was declared vice-chancellor at the request of Prince Mentchikoff, and Prince Mentchikoff he requited by contriving his ruin in the last reign, as is known to the world.

"*General Jagoushinsky*—Is the son of an organist belonging to the Lutheran church at Moscow, who

owes all his fortune to his pretty face formerly. For being a handsome youth he was taken by the great chancellor Golowkin, who was notorious for unnatural propensities, to be his page; and, in two years' time, taken from him by the late Czar, Peter I., for the same purpose, under the title of page of the chamber, where this merit, joined with an active, lively, gay spirit, soon raised him, and prevailed with the Czar to declare him at once captain of his Preobrashensky guards, and not long after adjutant-general. This advancement, with many marks of the Czar's increasing affection, gave Prince Mentchikoff great uneasiness and jealousy. The Czar, who had lost much of his former kindness for the prince, perceiving it, affected to give him every day fresh mortifications by repeated favours to Jagoushinsky, and at last declared him his favourite. His parts are not extraordinary, but a court life has given him politeness of behaviour, and his good nature would make him beloved, if a passionate temper, which is natural to him, and very often inflamed by excessive drinking, did not destroy all command of his reason, and hurry him sometimes to abuse his best friends in the most insolent manner, and divulge the most important secrets. Coward without an equal, and profuse to the highest degree; for he has squandered ample fortunes of his wife, with all the vast presents he has received from abroad and at home."

When Rondeau had made minute inquiries respecting the proposed change in the constitution, on the accession of Anne, he sent the following dispatch, on the 12th of March, 1730. "As soon as her imperial majesty arrived at Moscow, the high council took all possible care to hinder their enemies

from having an opportunity to speak to her in private; and Wasilei Dolgorucky, who was one of those gentlemen who carried to Mitau the articles which the Czarina signed when she accepted of the crown, had an apartment given him in the palace, that nobody should see her but those he introduced. This angered very much several great families, and all the little nobility, who resolved to employ their wives to know the empress's sentiments. Accordingly the Princes Czerkasky, Czernisheff, and General Soltikoff's ladies, were desired by their husbands and friends to find out if what the empress did was willingly, or if she was obliged to it by the high council. Those gentlewomen executed their orders so well and so privately, that they found her majesty was not satisfied with what was doing, and that she would very willingly accept the absolute sovereignty in case they could find means to procure it to her. As soon as the little nobility were informed of this, they secretly assembled to take proper measures, and at last resolved on what they should do to accomplish their designs.

"On the 25th of February, 1730, the little nobility, with Prince Czerkasky at their head, went in a great body to the palace, where they were introduced to her majesty, the high council being present, and humbly petitioned her to settle a steady form of government; since the high council had not yet thought fit to do it, and even refused to hear what they had to say for the good of their country. After the petition had been read, Wasilei Dolgorucky desired her majesty to go in her closet to consider of it before she consented to sign what they required. The duchess of Mecklenburg, her sister,

answered him that there was no occasion to consider, for those gentlemen asked nothing but what was very reasonable, and told her majesty she had pen and ink ready, so the empress set her hand immediately; which was no sooner done, than the little nobility retired into another room, where, after they had been some time, they returned to her majesty, and Knäs Yusupoff and Baratinskoy presented her another petition, which she gave to Prince Czerkasky to read, in which, after they had humbly thanked her for condescending to sign their first petition, they desired her to abolish the high council and senate, and to constitute in their stead a high ruling senate, composed of twenty-one persons, and not above one of a family, which should be chosen at present and for the future by ballot; and that her majesty would be so gracious as to accept of the absolute sovereignty, as her glorious predecessors had always had before. The Czarina made as if she was very much surprised at their request, and told them she always thought it was they and the high council who desired to limit her power; but at last she was prevailed upon to accept of their offer, and immediately called for the articles which she had signed at Mitau, and tore them in their presence.

"Then the little nobility retired again into another room, and drew up a petition of thanks to her majesty for having accepted of the absolute sovereignty, and they all kissed her hand. The high council, who had dined with her that day, did the same, and made as if they were very well satisfied, though they seemed thunderstruck with what had been done.

"Her czarish majesty has shown herself a prin-

cess of a great deal of vigour and courage *, without which she would have hardly been able to prevent her power from being very much limited."

The above plans and other projects for a change in the form of government certainly appear crude, and many persons naturally feared the unlimited power of a few families (the oligarchy of the nobility) more than a single sovereign elevated above the sphere of petty passions. On the other hand, Russia has not advanced a step, in a hundred years, in the science of government; and it soon appeared, that in the conferring of unlimited power, there was no guarantee for the good use of it.

"The nobility seems very much dissatisfied that her majesty employs so many foreigners about her person. Mr. Biron, a Courlander, who came with her, is made great chamberlain, as several others of that country are in great favour, at which the old Russians, who did expect she would have preferred them before these gentlemen, are displeased. It is thought that Baron Ostermann has made use of those new favourites to get the entire management of all affairs, and that when he is well settled he will sacrifice them, or at last send them back to Courland.

"Princess Elizabeth is sick, or has feigned herself so, for some time. Some report† it is because she was not chosen instead of the present empress, and others say not to be at the coronation, because it is thought she is with child by a grenadier, whom she is in love with, and that she could not appear in robes without discovering her condition. If this be the reason or not, I cannot affirm; but so far is

* Dispatch of 20th April, 1730.

† Dispatch of 18th May, 1730, vol. xiii.

certain, she leads a very irregular life, and the Czarina seems not to dislike, I suppose, that she should ruin her interest; for instead of sending away the favourite grenadier, who is, it is true, a gentleman, her majesty has dismissed him her service, that he may be always at the princess's command; he will in time probably ruin her. When I consider the wit and beauty of that young lady, I cannot forbear, being sorry to see she exposes herself to such a degree, for in time it must be known. This has been told me in great confidence by the surgeon, M. Lestocq, who was born at Hanover.

"The emperor Charles VI.* made M. Biron, the Czarina's great chamberlain and favourite, a present of his picture, set with diamonds, valued at least at 5000*l.*; and at the same time gave him a patent of count of the empire, though he was a person hardly known whilst he was in Courland with her majesty. I believe Count Biron will not be able to maintain himself long; for I am inclined to think Baron Ostermann has consented that all sorts of honour and riches shall be heaped on that gentleman, to render him odious to the Russians, and by that means be able in time to ruin him, as he has done all the other favourites who have been here of late years.

"You cannot imagine how magnificent this court is since the present reign †, though they have not a shilling in the treasury, and of course nobody is paid, which contributes very much to the general complaints. Notwithstanding this want of money, great sums are laid out by all the courtiers to get magnificent habits for the masquerade, which we are soon to have, and a fine troop of comedians is daily

* Dispatch of 22nd June, 1730. † Ibid. 3rd January, 1731.

expected from Warsaw, which are sent by the king of Poland to divert her majesty, who thinks of nothing else, and to heap up riches and honour on Count Biron, and to enrich his brother also.

"There has been a great intrigue carried on to get away Princess Elizabeth's favourite, the great grenadier, and substitute in his place Major Biron, *who she* doth (*? not*) love; but, nevertheless, he is continually with her, and the grenadier has been stripped of all she has given him and sent to Siberia; this had very much chagrined the duchess of Mecklenburg, who fears, by the interest of the Biron family, the Princess Elizabeth will be more caressed by the Czarina than herself and her daughter.

"The duchess of Mecklenburg continues to be very much indisposed, and is thought she will have a great deal of trouble to escape, considering she has drank a great deal of brandy of late years.

"Money* is continually wanted here; and I believe nobody can imagine but those who have been at Petersburg, how expensive a place it is, particularly for foreign ministers, who are obliged to have fine equipages; and on all great holidays fine new clothes, that cost as much again as at London or Paris. But as her majesty loves to see every body very fine, I must submit to it, and conform to the fashion, as all the other foreign ministers are obliged to do.

"The republicans (of 1730), as they were called†, were partly banished immediately to Siberia or other distant places, and those who then escaped have since been sent into exile whenever they have been found guilty of any slight offence."

* Dispatch of 25th September, 1734, vol. xix.

† Ibid. 15th January, 1737, vol. xxiii.

Meantime Biron had been created duke of Courland, and aimed at still higher honours, which were afterwards most unexpectedly realized. The succeeding dispatches of the ambassador give some further particulars. "It is said* that the duke of Courland has the design that his son shall marry the young duchess Anna of Mecklenburg, niece to the empress. It must be confessed it is a bold undertaking, considering what he was very few years ago; but now he is become a sovereign prince, and all powerful by her majesty's favour, nobody can yet foresee where his unbounded ambition will carry him, in case he continues in a condition to please her majesty. One of the greatest obstacles in the pretended design is the age of the parties, for the princess is already in her twentieth year, and the Prince Peter is just entered on his fifteenth year, which is too young to be married. But this great obstacle may in time be surmounted.

"The person of the princess, if not very handsome, is, at least, very passable. The duke was willing to go to Warsaw†, but her czarish majesty would not, on any terms, consent to his leaving this place, and even, it is affirmed, she shed tears on that occasion, which engaged the duke to change his mind, and try to get the investiture of Courland without being present.

"I believe," says the ambassador, on the 13th of January, 1739‡, "that the duke of Courland has the plan to settle the succession in Russia in his family. About fourteen days ago, the duke waited on the princess of Mecklenburg, and told her, that some people imagined he prevented the Czarina consenting to conclude the marriage between her highness

* Dispatch of 23rd September, 1738, vol. xxiv.
† Dispatch of 16th December. ‡ Vol. xxv.

and the prince of Bevern, designing to make a match between her and his eldest son, which he would never think of marrying against his inclination, whatever advantage his family might gain by it. That the emperor has lately proposed a German princess for his son, who had 200,000 crowns a-year; but that he had not thought proper to accept of the offer, being resolved that his son should choose for himself.

"Then his highness asked the princess what she thought of the prince of Bevern, to which she answered, that she was entirely at her majesty's disposal, and was always ready to obey her commands; but, in case her inclinations were to be consulted, she confessed she did not like the prince.

"I do not yet find that this step of the duke was made by the Czarina's order, which makes me believe that he was willing first to know which were the views of the princess before he fixed his plan, which is (if I judge right) to marry his son, if he can, to the princess, and to give his daughter to the prince of Bevern, who, his highness thinks, will be satisfied, in case he gets him made field-marshal."

This plan, however, miscarried: on the 14th of April, 1739, the ambassador writes: "The duke of Courland informed me, that her czarish majesty had resolved to give her niece, the Princess Anne, to the prince of Bevern." To explain the contradictions, the ambassador, on the 12th of May, made the following relation:—

"In the year 1732, it was agreed that the Prince Anthony Ulrick of Bevern should be sent to this place with a design, as it was then said, to marry him when of age to the Princess Anne, who has always been looked upon as presumptive heiress of

the Czarina ever since that princess mounted the throne of Russia. Accordingly, he arrived at Petersburg the 3d February, 1733. As I was present the first time he was presented to the duke of Courland, then Count Biron, I easily observed he seemed much surprised at seeing that prince so little for his age, which made me conjecture the court of Vienna had represented his highness in a better light than he then appeared in. Nevertheless, the Czarina received him with much civility, and took the greatest care that he should be provided with everything according to his quality, and has ever since continued to defray his expenses. For some years he continued to be little regarded, which made everybody think that this court could have been very glad to find a handsome pretence to get rid of him. Afterwards the prince showed courage in the war against the Turks, and the Marshal Münich extolled his courage. The princess likes not Bevern, but also not the son of Biron.

"As it was thought high time by every Russian that wishes well to his country, to marry the princess who is inclined to be fat, it is thought the duke of Courland has not dared to oppose the whole nation, finding, perhaps, that princess sooner willing to marry the prince of Bevern (since no other suitable party offered) than to stay three or four years for

her majesty ordered her niece to

ese princes, which she consented to

in favour of the prince of Wolfen-

certainly every way the properest

both in point of birth and age;

that during the two last campaigns

ery much grown, and it may now

be said, without flattery, that he has a handsome person; and I believe that the duke of Courland has been the main manager of this important affair, and that by it he has secured the duchy of Courland to his family for ever; for they do not doubt that he has got the duke of Wolfenbüttel to promise to give one of his sisters to the prince of Courland.

"Anne and Bevern were married by a Russian archbishop. It is not to be expressed the magnificence of the cavalcade, nor the fine clothes and equipages that have been made on this occasion. All this week is to be employed in different diversions at court." (Dispatch of 3d July.)

It then appeared that everything, especially the difficult question respecting the succession to the throne, was prudently and happily regulated, both for the present and for the future. How deceitful these hopes proved is related in detail in another place.

I here subjoin an interesting account of the Saporogue Cossacks, given by Rondeau in a dispatch of the 24th April, 1736.

"The Saporogue Cossacks are a very strong and indefatigable people. Their cashevoy or general has a room for himself, of about ten feet square, but the others live in large rooms called kuraveis, in each of which there are about six or seven hundred men. Whoever pleases to go into the kuravei may lodge and eat with them without being asked, and without thanking them for their entertainment. As the whole nation are a very extraordinary people, more used to live in the fields than in settled habitations, there are generally four or five hundred men about every kuravei, who lie in the open air, but

have the liberty to come into the room when they please without any ceremony. The Saporogues are a sort of knights, who suffer no women among them; for if any one of them was found to keep a woman he is stoned to death. They have no written law, but all causes are judged by six or seven persons they choose for that purpose; but their sentence cannot be put in execution till it be approved by the fraternity. If any theft is committed among them, and the robber is taken, he is immediately hung up by the ribs. In case a murderer is discovered, they dig a pit and lay the murdered person on the murderer and bury them both together. They profess the Greek religion, and when they were under the protection of the Turks, the patriarch of Constantinople furnished them with priests; but since these two years, that they are under the protection of the Czarina, their priests are sent them by the archbishop of Kiew. They have only one church, which is served by an abbot and a few priests, who are not permitted to meddle with any worldly matters further than to intercede for delinquents, and to see them do public penance in the church in case they commit any slight fault. The Saporogues admit in their fraternity all persons of whatever nation they are, in case they embrace the Greek religion, and are willing to undergo seven years' probation before they are admitted knights. If any of their fraternity run away, they make no inquiry after them, but look upon such as unworthy of their society. Their riches consist in cattle, particularly in horses. Some of them have above a hundred, and there is hardly any one of those Cossacks but has ten or twenty. They have a great many thousand horses, that run all together in

the open fields. It is hardly ever heard that one is stolen, for such thefts are unpardonable among those people. They sow no corn. In time of war they plunder all the provisions they can from their enemies; and in time of peace they barter horses and fish for all sorts of necessaries. They catch vast quantities of fish, particularly in the river Dnieper. In their studs they have Turkish and Circassian stallions. Their arms, that consist in rifle guns and sabres, they make themselves. Nobody is admitted a knight of this society who is not very strong and well made; but any one may be admitted as Cholopps who are their servants, and some of them have two or three. They never care to mention how many knights there are in their fraternity; and when asked, they say they cannot tell, because their number exceeds 20,000 men. It is certain the greatest part of these people are Cossacks, who have deserted from the Ukraine; but the Cholopps, or servants, are mostly Poles. The Saporogues are divided into thirty great rooms or kuraveis, each of which has its particular commander or attaman, who, nevertheless, are obliged to obey the cashevoy or general. Every knight has the liberty to vote, when they choose, a general; and in case he does not behave well, they turn him out of his employment and choose another, as it happened some years ago to the present cashevoy, who was turned out, and another elected, who is since dead, and the present was re-chosen. When a Saporogue knight dies, he may leave his horses and what he has to whom he will, but generally the church gets the most, which is given to maintain the priest."

GENEAL[illegible]CAL TABLE OF THE EMPERORS AND EMPRESSES OF RUSSIA.

(1) Alexius Michailowicz.

Iwan Alexiewicz.

(2) Peter the Great. † 1725.
Married (3) Catharine I. † 17 May, 1727.

Catharine.
Married Charles Leopold
Von Mecklenburg Schwerin.

Anne.
Married Anthony Ulrick
of Brunswick.

(6) Iwan III.
Emperor 28 Oct[illegible] 1740.
† 5 [illegible]

(5) Anne.
Empress 1730.
† 28 October, 1740.

Alexei.
† 7 July, 1718.

Natalia (4) Peter II.
Emperor 17 May, 1727.
† Jan. 18, 1730.

Anne.
Married Charles Frederick
Von Holstein Gottorp.

(8) Peter III.
Emperor 5 Jan. 1762.
† 14 June, 1762.

(7) Elizabeth.
Empress 17[illegible]
† 5 January, 176[illegible]

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